The Use and Intent of PROPHECY, *in the several Ages of the World:*

IN SIX

DISCOURSES,

Delivered at the

TEMPLE CHURCH,

IN

APRIL and MAY, 1724.

Published at the Desire of the MASTERS *of the* BENCH *of the Two Honourable* SOCIETIES.

To which are added,

Three DISSERTATIONS.

I. *The Authority of the Second Epistle of St.* PETER.

II. *The Sense of the Antients before* Christ, *upon the Circumstances and Consequences of the* FALL.

III. *The Blessing of* JUDAH, Gen. xlix.

THE SECOND EDITION CORRECTED.

By THO. SHERLOCK, *D. D. Dean of* Chichester, *and Master of the* Temple.

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DISCOURSES,

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APRIL and MAY, 1774.

10

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I. The Authenticity of the Four Gospels.

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The Second Edition Corrected.

By THO. SHERLOCK, D.D.

Chantor, and Prebendary of the Temple.

LONDON:

Printed for T. Payne, near Mews-Gate, and Sold by J. Rivington in St. Paul's Church-Yard, 1774.

To the Worshipful the

Masters of the Bench

Of the Two Honourable

Societies of the Temple,

THESE

DISCOURSES,

Published at their Desire,

Are Inscribed by

Their most obedient

humble Servant,

Tho. Sherlock.

To the Workmen of the

MASTERS of the BATCH

Of the Two Honourable

Societies of the TEMPLE,

THESE

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Are Inscribed by

Their most Obliged Friend

and Humble Servant

THO. SHADWELL.

Printed for

PREFACE *to the* Reader.

I *Have nothing more to ſay for the Publication of theſe Diſcourſes, than what appears in the Title Page.*

But, that the Reader may not be deceived, it is proper to tell him here, that he is not to expect in the following Diſcourſes an Anſwer to a Book lately publiſhed, entitled, Grounds and Reaſons, *&c. — That Work was undertaken, and has been diſcharged to the Satisfaction of the Publick by a much abler Hand. When I entered upon the Deſign of forming theſe Diſcourſes, it was with a View of ſhewing the* Uſe *and* Intent *of Prophecy, in the* ſeveral Ages *of the World, and the manifeſt* Connexion *between the* Prophecies *of* every Age. *They who conſider the Prophecies under the old Teſtament, as ſo many Predictions only, independent of each other, can never form a right Judgment of the Argument, for the Truth of Chriſtianity, drawn from this Topick; nor be able to ſatisfy themſelves, when they are confronted with the Ob-*

jections of Unbelievers. It is an eaſy matter, for Men of Leiſure and tolerable Parts, to find Difficulties in particular Predictions, and in the Application of them made by Writers who lived many hundred Years ago, and who had many antient Books and Records of the Jewiſh *Church, from which they drew many Paſſages, and perhaps ſome Prophecies; which Books and Records we have not to enable us to underſtand, and to juſtify their Applications. But 'tis not ſo eaſy a matter to ſhew, or to perſuade the World to believe, that a Chain of Prophecies, reaching through ſeveral thouſand Years, delivered at different Times, yet manifeſtly ſubſervient to one and the ſame Adminiſtration of Providence, from Beginning to End, is the Effect of Art and Contrivance, and religious Fraud: That for ſo many Ages ſucceſſively proper Perſons ſhould be found to carry on the Cheat; and that none of them ſhould have any Intereſt to ſerve by betraying the Secret, or ſo much Honeſty and Regard to Truth as to diſcover it.*

The Account given in the fourth Diſcourſe of the Remiſſion of the Curſe on the Ground, *by Covenant with* Noah *and his Poſterity, may be treated perhaps as the Effect of mere Fancy and Imagination;*

tion; for there are many Prejudices which lie in its Way. All that I ſhall ſay more upon that Subject, is only this: If you allow the Account it carries on the Series of God's Diſpenſations towards Mankind, in a natural Gradation, and opens a new Scene of Providence, where there ſeems to be great Reaſon to expect one, at the Beginning of the new World: If you reject this Account, there ſeems to be a great Gap in the ſacred Hiſtory, and the new World ſets out, juſt where the old one left off; and yet who would not expect that ſo great a Change ſhould be attended with ſome new Degree of Light, to comfort and ſupport the poor Remains of Mankind? If the Notion is not approved, it is at leaſt an innocent one; and I am not ſo fond of it, as to enter further into the Defence of it.

As to the Diſſertations *which I have added, the Relation they have to the Subject of the Diſcourſes will appear to thoſe, who think them worth the Reading; and there is no Reaſon to trouble others with any Account of them.*

DISCOURSE I.

2 PETER i. 19.

We have also a more sure Word of Prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a Light that shineth in a dark Place, until the Day dawn, and the Day-Star arise in your Hearts.

THERE being evidently a Comparison in the Text between the *Word of Prophecy*, and something before mention'd or intended, 'tis necessary to look back to see how the Relation stands, and what the Thing is

to which the *Word of Prophecy* is compar'd and preferr'd. At the 16th Verſe the Apoſtle ſays, *We have not followed cunningly deviſed Fables when we made known unto you the Power and Coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* And after thus diſclaiming all Art and Deceit, in ſetting forth the Promiſes and Expectations of the Goſpel, he proceeds to declare upon what Evidence and Authority he had rais'd ſuch Expectations in them: *But* (we) *were Eye-witneſſes of his Majeſty, for he received from God the Father Honour and Glory, when there came ſuch a Voice to him from the excellent Glory; This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed. And this Voice which came from Heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy Mount.* Immediately follow the Words of the Text, *We have alſo a more ſure Word of Prophecy.*

You ſee upon what Foundation their Inference ſtands, who aſſert, That the Evidence which Chriſtians have from Prophecy for the Certainty of their Hopes and Expectations, compar'd with the Evidence

vidence they have from the Preaching of the Apoſtles, who were Eye-witneſſes and Ear-witneſſes of what they report concerning the Majeſty of Chriſt, is the greater and the ſurer Evidence; or in the Words of a late Author, That * "Pro-"phecy is a ſtronger Argument than a "Miracle, which depends upon external "Evidence and Teſtimony". This Author has taken great Pains to ſhew, that the Argument from Prophecy for the Truths of Chriſtianity, as managed and apply'd by the Writers of the New Teſtament, is abſurd and ridiculous; and that we may not flatter our ſelves with Hopes of Aſſiſtance from other Arguments, he gives us this Text of St. *Peter*, to ſhew, by the Authority of our own Scriptures, that Prophecy, as bad an Argument as it is, is nevertheleſs the very beſt that our Cauſe affords: But his Views be to himſelf; what Truth there is in his Expoſition and Application of this Part of Scripture, we ſhall ſoon ſee.

* *A Diſcourſe of the Grounds and Reaſons of the Chriſtian Religion, printed* 1724. p. 27.

Interpreters differ very much in expounding this Paſſage; but all, as far as I ſee, agree in rejecting this Senſe, which gives a Superiority to the Evidence of Prophecy above all other Evidence, by which the Truth of the Goſpel is confirm'd; and indeed the Text expounded to this Meaning, contradicts not only the general Senſe of Mankind upon this Subject, but will be found likewiſe inconſiſtent with itſelf, and many other Places of Scripture: For, firſt, let any Man conſider, and ſay upon what Proof and Evidence the Authority of Prophecy itſelf depends: Can any Prophet give greater Proof of his divine Miſſion, than the Power of working Miracles? And if this be the laſt and the greateſt Proof he can give of his being ſent by God, can the Evidence of Prophecy ever riſe higher than the Evidence of Miracles, upon which it ultimately depends for all its Authority? When *Gideon* was call'd to the Deliverance of *Iſrael*, the Angel of the Lord came and ſaid unto him, *The Lord is with thee, thou mighty Man of Valour*; — *go in this thy Might, and thou*

thou ſhalt ſave Iſrael from the Hand of the Midianites; have not I ſent thee? Here now was a Prophecy deliver'd by the Angel of the Lord to encourage his Undertaking. What ſays *Gideon* to this? He deſires a Sign; *If now I have found Favour in thy Sight, then ſhew me a Sign that thou talkeſt with me.* A Sign is given him, a miraculous Sign; he is ſatisfy'd, and undertakes the Work appointed; to which he is again encouraged by two Miracles wrought at his Requeſt, *Judges* vii. What think you now? The Prophecy deliver'd by the Angel was as much a Prophecy before, as it was after Miracles wrought in Confirmation of it: But was the Word of Prophecy more ſure before the Miracles than after? If ſo, why was a Sign deſir'd? And when deſir'd, why was it granted? Does God work Miracles to humour Men in their Folly; or is it to confirm their Faith? If it be to confirm their Faith, then our Faith in the Prophets depends upon the Authority of Miracles; and ſince the Stream can never riſe above the Spring-Head, the Evidence

of Prophecy cannot be greater than the Evidence of Miracles. But let us take an higher Inſtance; *Moſes* was the firſt, and the greateſt Prophet of the Law, to whom God ſpoke *Face to Face:* He was call'd by God to deliver the Children of *Iſrael* out of *Egypt*, and commiſſion'd to aſſure them of God's immediate Protection. This I ſuppoſe was ſufficient to make him a Prophet to *Iſrael:* But what ſays *Moſes? Behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken to my Voice; for they will ſay, the Lord hath not appeared unto thee.* Was this a fooliſh Complaint in *Moſes?* If it was, how came God to liſten to it, and to furniſh him with an Anſwer above all Exception, by giving him immediately a Power to work Miracles in Confirmation of his Prophecy? Does not this Method of God's Proceeding plainly ſhew, that Miracles are the Prophets greateſt Authority and Confirmation? What is that ſuperior Evidence of Prophecy then, which is ſaid ſo much to exceed the Evidence of Miracles? But to go on: The Compariſon in the Text, with reſpect to St. *Peter* himſelf,

himſelf, is between the *Word of Prophecy* and the *immediate* Word of God: And according to this Expoſition of the Text, St. *Peter* who declares, that he heard the Voice of God *himſelf* in the Mount, is made in his OWN Perſon to ſay, (for the Words are, WE *have a more ſure Word of Prophecy*;) That the dark Prophecies of the Old Teſtament were a ſurer and more certain Evidence, than this immediate Voice of God which he heard with his own Ears. Now what is Prophecy, that it ſhould be more ſurely and certainly to be depended on than the immediate Voice of God? Is it poſſible to think that St. *Peter*, or any Man in his Wits, could make ſuch a Compariſon?

But further; let us conſider what Account St. *Peter* himſelf gives of this *Word of Prophecy*; which we are told, is beyond Compariſon the beſt and the ſureſt Evidence we have for our Faith: He compares it to *a Light ſhining in a dark Place*; and diſtinguiſhes it from *Day-light*, and that Brightneſs which is uſher'd in by the *Day-Star*. This *Word of Prophecy* then is here compar'd by St. *Peter*

to the glimmering Light of a Candle ſeen at a Diſtance in a dark Night; which tho' it gives ſome Direction, yet is *nothing*, compar'd to clear Day-light. Is not this now a choice Account of the Evidence of the Goſpel; nay, of the *very beſt* Evidence which we have of the Goſpel? Are we ſtill ſurrounded on all Sides with Darkneſs, aſſiſted by one only diſtant glimmering Light? Was it thus that *Chriſt* came to be *a Light to lighten the Gentiles, and* to be *the Glory of Iſrael?* St. *Peter* in his firſt Epiſtle tells all Chriſtians, that they *are called out of Darkneſs into God's marvellous Light*; how comes he then in this ſecond Epiſtle to tell them, that they are ſtill in Darkneſs, and have nothing but a Light glimmering in the Darkneſs to direct them? Can the ſame Writer poſſibly by ſuppos'd to give ſuch different Accounts of our Goſpel-State? Ask St. *Paul*, what State Chriſtians are in, he will tell you, *That the Light of the glorious Goſpel of Chriſt, who is the Image of God, has ſhone unto them*, 2 Cor. iv. 4. Ask the Evangeliſts, they will tell you, *The Day-ſpring from*

from on high hath viſited us, to give Light to them that ſit in Darkneſs, and in the Shadow of Death. Ask any, or all of the Apoſtles, they will tell you their Commiſſion is, *To open the Eyes of the People, and to turn them from Darkneſs to Light*; Acts xxvi. 16. agreeably to what our Lord told his Diſciples, *Ye are the Light of the World*, Mat. v. 14. How different is this Account from that which St. *Peter* is ſuppos'd to give of the *beſt Light* we have under the Goſpel, in Contradiction to himſelf, and almoſt every Writer of the New Teſtament?

But let us go one Step further, and we ſhall find, that St. *Peter* in the Text is ſo far from ſpeaking of the *Word of Prophecy*, as of the beſt Light or Evidence to be had for the Point in queſtion, whatever it was, that he manifeſtly ſpeaks of it as *not the beſt*; but as a Light to be attended to only until a better comes: Hear his Words, *We have alſo a more ſure Word of Prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a Light that ſhineth in a dark Place,*

Place, UNTIL *the Day dawn, and the Day-Star ariſe in your Hearts.* This Light you ſee is to be attended to only till the Day Light comes, ſo far is it from being itſelf the *beſt* Light, that it muſt give Way to a *better*. What the true Import and meaning of this is, we ſhall ſee hereafter. But ſurely St. *Peter* wou'd not have limited any Time, for their attending to the Word of Prophecy, had he been conſidering it as the beſt Support of Chriſtian Faith; for in that Senſe it ought ever to be attended to, and to be the conſtant Employment of a Chriſtians Meditation, ſo long as Life and Thought remain with him.

Theſe Reaſons, I ſuppoſe, prevail'd with Interpreters to quit the apparent Senſe of this Text, which ſeems to prefer the Authority of Prophecy, to the Authority of all other Evidence, whereby the Doctrine of the Goſpel is confirmed; and to ſeek for ſome other, more conformable to Truth and Reaſon. But however they are agreed in rejecting *this* Senſe, they are far from being agreed in eſtabliſhing any *other*.

The

The *Greek* Expoſitors ſuppoſe the Senſe here to be, That Prophecy is *now*, *to us Chriſtians*, a more ſure and convincing Evidence than ever it was, having been verified and eſtabliſhed by the Events. This Interpretation preſerves the *Force* of the *Compariſon*; but then it places the Compariſon where St. *Peter* has not placed it; he manifeſtly compares the Evidence of Prophecy to the Evidence ariſing from the Glorification of *Chriſt*, atteſted by thoſe, who delivered what they had heard and ſeen with their own Eyes and Ears: But of the Evidence and Weight of Prophecy *before* and *after* the Completion he ſays nothing. *Grotius* thought this Senſe the moſt Convenient and has adopted it in his Commentary on the Place.

Others * ſuppoſe that the Comparative is uſed in this Text, in the Senſe of the Poſitive, to expreſs the great Certainty of the Evidence mentioned. According to them, the meaning is, "That we have "a very ſure Evidence in the Words of

* Eraſmus, Junius *and* Tremellius.

"Prophecy:"

"Prophecy:" This Expoſition introduces a new Uſe of Language into the Text, for which having no ſufficient Authority to produce, it can claim no Authority itſelf. The Inſtances given to ſupport this Conſtruction, as far as I have ſeen, are not pertinently alledged.

Others; preſerving the natural Signification of the Words, and therefore admitting the Compariſon, will not however allow the Compariſon to be *abſolute*, but only *relative*; relative to the Opinions and Prejudices of the *Jews*, to whom this Epiſtle was directed. According to this Interpretation, the Apoſtle does not aſſert, That Prophecy is *in itſelf* a better Argument than the evangelical Evidence; but only that it is better *to Jews*; who being educated in an Eſteem and Reverence for the Prophets from their Childhood, and being but new and tender Converts to the Goſpel, had a much greater Regard to the Authority of their own Prophets, than to the Teſtimony of the Apoſtles. But as to this Expoſition; in the firſt Place, there is nothing in the Text to countenance it: In the next Place;

Place; had this been St. *Peter*'s meaning, he never wou'd have ſpoken in the firſt Perſon, and joined himſelf in the ſame Opinion with his Country-men: *WE have*, ſays he, *a more ſure Word of Prophecy* —— Now whatever the *Jews* thought, St. *Peter* cou'd not think that the antient obſcure Prophecies, and which he compares immediately to *a Light ſhining in a dark Place*, were a ſtronger Evidence than the Miracles of *Jeſus*, and the Atteſtation of God himſelf to the Truth of his Miſſion. This therefore cou'd not be St. *Peter*'s Meaning.

Theſe are the moſt conſiderable Expoſitions, which have been given of this Paſſage. 'Tis evident that all Interpreters have been ſenſible of the Abſurdity of ſetting up Prophecy as a ſuperior Evidence to all other Goſpel Evidence; and that to avoid this Difficulty, they have been driven to ſeek out other Meanings. And yet without all Queſtion, the Words of the Text according to their moſt natural Senſe, do import that the Evidence of Prophecy, is a *ſurer* Evidence than

that before mentioned; which was the Apoſtles own Teſtimony of the Glory of *Chriſt*, which he had ſeen with his Eyes; and of the Voice of God declaring *Chriſt* to be his beloved Son; of which the Apoſtle was an Ear-witneſs in the Mount. But as natural as this Senſe is, yet they who conclude from hence, that Prophecy is a better Evidence of the *Miſſion of Chriſt*; and the *Truth of the Goſpel*, than any other Evidence, draw a Concluſion which the Text will not juſtify. For look back and ſee what is the Thing to be proved by this *more ſure* Word of Prophecy; is it the *Miſſion of Chriſt?* St. *Peter* ſays nothing of it. Is it the *Truth of the Goſpel?* nothing leſs. The Apoſtle tells us in the 16th Verſe; That God declared *Chriſt* by a Voice from the excellent Glory, To *be his beloved Son:* But this is not the Thing he wou'd prove, for he brings this Declaration to prove ſomething elſe: And this Declaration is conſidered as one of the Proofs to which he compares the Word of Prophecy.

To clear this Matter, let us conſider what

what it is that St. *Peter* intended to prove; for without knowing this, 'tis impoſſible to judge of the Compariſon in the Text; for in ſome Caſes *Prophecy* is no Proof, in others it may be our very beſt Evidence, notwithſtanding that it is a glimmering Light, faintly ſhining thro' the Dark.

The ſecond Epiſtle of St. *Peter* was written to ſupport and maintain the Hopes and Expectations which he had raiſed in his firſt; as will be evident upon a Compariſon of the two together. To the firſt Epiſtle therefore we muſt go, to ſee the Foundation and Riſe of the Matter to which this controverted Text in the ſecond relates.

The Chriſtians, to whom the firſt Epiſtle was directed, were in a State of ſevere Tryal and Perſecution; They were *for a Seaſon in Heavineſs thro' manifold Temptations*, i. 6. They were *ſpoken againſt as evil Doers*, ii. 12. iii. 16. iv. 4. They *ſuffered for Righteouſneſs ſake*, iii. 14. They were *reproached for the Name of Chriſt*, iv. 14. and were *made Partakers of his Sufferings*, v. 13. This being the Caſe, The Apoſtle adminiſters ſuita-

ble Advice to them: He calls upon them to *arm themſelves with the ſame Mind*, which was in *Chriſt*, who *ſuffered for us in the Fleſh*, iv. 1. he bids them account it their Happineſs that *they were reproached for the Name of Chriſt*, iv. 14. and *rejoyce that they were Partakers of his Sufferings*, ℣. 13. He reminds them that this *fiery Tryal* was no *ſtrange* or ſurprizing Event; but what had been foretold, and what they had Reaſon to expect, iv. 12. And that *the ſame Afflictions were accompliſhed in their Brethren in the World*, v. 9. That the Time was come (foretold before) That *Judgment muſt begin at the Houſe of God*, iv. 17.

Together with theſe Admonitions he gives the Aſſurance of a certain Deliverance near at Hand. He tells them they *were kept by the Power of God, through Faith, unto Salvation ready to be revealed*, i. 5. That their Tryal wou'd yield *Honour and Glory at the appearing of Jeſus Chriſt*, ℣. 7. he bids them have perfect *Hope* and Confidence *in the Grace*, or Deliverance, *to be brought at the Revelation*

velation of Christ Jesus, ℣. 13. *in the Day of Visitation*, ii. 12. For the certainty of this Deliverance, and *Salvation now ready* (or prepared) *to be revealed*, and of the Share they should have in it, he appeals to the antient Prophets, and the *Spirit of Christ in them, testifying before-hand the Sufferings of Christ and the Glory which should follow*, i. 11. *Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things now reported unto you*, ℣. 12. The first Scene, the Sufferings of *Christ* being over, iv. 1. his glory was ready to be reveal'd, which would bring them *exceeding Joy*, iv. 13. and be to the Destruction of their Persecutors, the *ungodly* and the *Sinners*, ℣. 18.

All these Hopes were founded in this, That Christ himself had *already* receiv'd *Glory* and *Power*, and would return in his *Glory* and *Power* to save true Believers. Our Trust in God is by St. *Peter* built upon this, that God *raised him* (Christ) *from the dead, and gave him Glory*, 1 Pet. i. 21. And it is at the *Revelation* of this *Glory*, that Christians are taugh to expect *exceeding Joy*, iv. 13. You see

now how much Weight is laid by St. *Peter* in his firſt Epiſtle upon the Expectation of Chriſt's *coming* in the *Power* and *Glory* of God.

It is very probable that the diſtreſſed Chriſtians conceiv'd at firſt great Hopes from theſe Aſſurances given them by an Apoſtle of Chriſt; and expected (as it is natural for Men in Affliction to do) that every Day would bring their *Deliverance* with it. But when one Year after another paſs'd, and no *Deliverance* came; when the *Scoffers* began to ridicule their Hopes, and ask'd in Mockery, *Where is the Promiſe of his Coming?* 2 Pet. iii. 3, 4. their Hearts grew ſick; and their Hopes deferr'd, inſtead of being any Comfort or Support to them, became an Addition of Grief, and fill'd them with Fears and Suſpicions, leſt they had believ'd in vain. Many of them, worn out with Diſtreſs and Perſecution, began to give way, and willingly liſten'd to the corrupt Teachers, who inſtructed them to keep fair with the World, and to keep their Faith to themſelves; by Means of which wicked Doctrine, they

were

were *led away, and fell from their Stedfaſtneſs*, 2 Ep. chap. iii. ℣. 17. and to avoid ſuffering, *denied the Lord that bought them*, Chap. iii. ℣. 1.

In this State of Things, and at the Diſtance of five or ſix Years from the writing of the firſt Epiſtle, the Apoſtle ſends his ſecond Letter; and it anſwers in every Point to this Account. In the firſt Chapter the Apoſtle endeavours to re-eſtabliſh and confirm the Hopes of *Believers*; but he does it with the Air of one who had been *reproached* for his Doctrine; *We have not*, ſays he, *followed cunningly deviſed Fables, when we made known to you the* POWER *and* COMING *of the Lord Jeſus*, chap. i. ℣. 16. You ſee here again the true Point upon which St. *Peter* placed the Hopes and Expectations of true Believers. In the ſecond Chapter he takes Notice of the *falſe Teachers who brought in damnable Hereſies, denying the Lord that bought them*; theſe he threatens with *ſwift Deſtruction*, ℣. 1. and tells them, That, however they might conceive of the *Promiſe* of *Chriſt*'s ſpeedy *Coming*,

yet they would aſſuredly find, that *their own Judgment* did not *linger*, nor their own *Damnation ſlumber*, ℣. 3. that it would *have been better for them, not* to have known *the Way of Righteouſneſs, than after they have known it to turn from the holy Commandment delivered to them*, ℣. 21. In the third and laſt Chapter he conſiders the *Scoffers*, and their irreligious Inſult, *Where is the Promiſe of his Coming?* ℣. 4. He enters into their Argument, and ſhews them from what had already happen'd in the World, how perverſly they reaſon'd about future Things. He concludes the whole with proper Cautions to Chriſtians, when they conſider and endeavour to underſtand the Times and Seaſons of God's Judgments; and guards, not only his own, but St. *Paul*'s Doctrine upon this Article, the Coming of Chriſt, (ſo much was his Mind bent to clear this one Point) againſt the *perverſe* Uſe of the *Unlearned* and *Unſtable*, ℣. 15, 16.

You ſee now what is the main, the only great Point, in this ſecond Epiſtle; it is the *Coming* of *Chriſt* in Power and Glory,

Glory, to deliver the Faithful, and to take Vengeance of the Ungodly and Unbelievers, as foretold by the Prophets under both Teſtaments. But this *Coming* of Chriſt was *future* and at a Diſtance; and depended entirely (as to any Knowledge that could be had of it) upon the Authority of *Prophecy:* For which Reaſon St. *Peter* refers, in his firſt Epiſtle, to the antient Prophets, and to the inſpir'd Preachers of the Goſpel, to juſtify the Hopes he rais'd; *of which Salvation*, or Deliverance, ſays he, *the Prophets have enquired and ſearched diligently, who propheſied of the Grace that ſhould come unto you*, chap. i. 10. which Things *are now reported unto you by them that have preached the Goſpel unto you, with the Holy Ghoſt ſent down from Heaven*, ℣. 12. And for the ſame Reaſon in his ſecond Epiſtle he refers again to *Prophecy*, as being of all others (and in Things of Futurity it needs muſt be) the *moſt ſure Evidence.*

This Account of St. *Peter*'s Epiſtles is indeed not mine, but his own: For he tells us expreſsly, That his Intention in

both his Epiſtles was, to make them, to whom they were ſent, *mindful of the Words which were ſpoken before of the holy Prophets*, he adds, *and of the Commandments of us the Apoſtles of the Lord and Saviour:* 2 Ep. iii. 1, 2. That this latter Part relates to the ſame Subject as the former, will appear by comparing it with the Paſſage juſt before quoted, 1 *Ep.* i. 12. where St. *Peter* conſiders the Apoſtles, as Prophets, or Expounders of the Prophets, under the Aſſiſtance of the Holy Ghoſt, preaching thoſe very Things which the antient Prophets had *teſtified beforehand.*

Take this Key along with you, and ſee how it will open *this* ſo much perplex'd Paſſage of Scripture now under Conſideration: The Apoſtle's Reaſoning to the faithful Believers, is this, *We have not followed cunningly deviſed Fables, when we made known unto you the* POWER *and* COMING *of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, but were Eye-witneſſes of his* MAJESTY. *For he received from God the Father* HONOUR *and* GLORY, *when there came ſuch a Voice to him from the*

excellent Glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleaſed. And this Voice which came from Heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy Mount. We have alſo a MORE SURE *Word of Prophecy.* 2 Ep. i. 16, &c.

'Tis evident that the POWER and COMING of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* is the only Point here in Queſtion; not a Word is there relating to any other Fact or Doctrine of the Goſpel. To prove *this Point*, the Apoſtle tells them he had been an *Eye-witneſs* of his MAJESTY, or GLORY. Whilſt our Saviour liv'd on Earth, his Condition was mean, and his Fortune low; this was a great Prejudice againſt him in the Opinion of the *Jews*; who expected greater Things from their Redeemer, and could not eaſily hope to ſee him return in *Glory* and *Power*, who liv'd and dy'd ſo *meanly* and ſo *miſerably*. 'Tis a ſufficient Anſwer to all ſuch Prejudices to prove, that, mean as he appear'd, he had a *real Majeſty*, and was actually inveſted with *Honour* and *Glory* from God the Father.

But this Evidence manifeſtly extends but to one Part of the Point in Queſtion, to ſhew that Chriſt had *himſelf* been *glorified*; what is there then to ſhew that he will ever *return again* in this *Glory* and *Power?* For allow all this to be true, might an Objector ſay; yet how does it prove the Hopes you would raiſe of his *ſpeedy Return* in *Power* and *Glory*, to *deliver* his Servants, and to take *Vengeance* of his Foes? For what is *paſt* we willingly take your Word; you are a competent Witneſs of what your *Eyes beheld*, and of what your *Ears heard:* But will your ſeeing him in Glory on the Mount *ſome Years ago*, neceſſarily infer, that he ſhall come again in Glory *ſome Years hence*; and that too, to execute the very Purpoſes you declare? Can any Certainty, as to *future* Events, be collected from paſt *Events?* Or, can any thing we ſee *this* Year, aſſure us what will happen to us the *next?*

'Tis true, (we may ſuppoſe the Apoſtle to anſwer) all *future* Events are in the Hands of God; to him only are they known, and from him only can

they certainly be learn'd. All other Arguments in this Caſe can amount only to Probabilities and Preſumptions; and a great Preſumption 'tis that Chriſt ſhall come in *Glory*, that we have already ſeen him *glorified*; and it is a further Evidence of his *Power* to deliver his Servants, ſince God has openly declar'd him to be *his well-beloved Son*: But to aſſure us, that he will indeed *ſo come*, and *ſo uſe* his Power, *We have a more ſure Word of Prophecy*: i.e. We have the very Word of God, (ſpeaking by his Prophets) to whom all *Futurity* is *known*, to aſſure us of the Certainty of this *future* Event.

This Interpretation, as it is eaſy and natural in itſelf, and renders to every Expreſſion in the Text its proper and uſual Signification; ſo it is neceſſary, I conceive, to the Apoſtle's Argument, and plainly inforc'd by the Context; and ſtands clear of all Difficulties. Here is no Pretence to ſay, That *Prophecy* is a better Argument for the *Truth* of the *Goſpel*, than all the *Miracles* of Chriſt and his *Apoſtles*; for the *Truth* of the *Goſpel* is not the Point here in Queſtion.

St.

St. *Peter* ſpeaks only of the *Coming of Chriſt in Power*, and of a *Salvation ready to be revealed*; which being *yet to come*, admitted of no *ſurer* Evidence than the *Word of Prophecy*; which yet, he tells us, was only as *a Light ſhining in a dark Place*: But the Goſpel was not a Thing *ready to be revealed*, it had long ſince been reveal'd; the Goſpel was not *a Light ſhining in a dark Place*, but, as he himſelf expreſsly calls it, *a marvellous Light*, into which they had been call'd out of *Darkneſs*. 1 Ep. ii. 9.

One Word more, and I have done with this Subject: The *more ſure Word of Prophecy* here mention'd is not to be underſtood merely of the Prophecies of the *Old Teſtament*, for it may refer to the Prophecies of the *New*, and probably does, as appears by St. *Peter*'s Appealing, not only to the antient Prophets, but alſo to the Preachers of the Goſpel. How unhappily then was this Text made Choice of, to ſet up antient Prophecy in Oppoſition to the Goſpel-Evidence, ſince the Prophecy here intended is probably itſelf a *Goſpel*-Evidence; and ſo far from being

being ſuperiour to *all the Miracles of Chriſt and his Apoſtles*, that it owes all its Authority to them.

The giving Light to this Paſſage will furniſh us with an Anſwer to one Objection rais'd againſt the Authority of this ſecond Epiſtle of S. *Peter*: The learned *Grotius* judg'd from ſome Characters which he obſerv'd in it, that this ſecond Epiſtle was penn'd after the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*; before which St. *Peter* was dead. But 'tis very evident that the Author of this ſecond Epiſtle ſpeaks of Chriſt's *Coming* in *Power* and *Glory*, in the very Manner which St. *Peter* ſpeaks of it in the firſt Epiſtle; and indeed with no other View than that of juſtifying what was deliver'd in the firſt Epiſtle. If by the *Salvation ready to be revealed*, and the *Day of Viſitation*, and the *Appearing of Jeſus Chriſt*, in the firſt Epiſtle, we are to underſtand the Apoſtle as referring to the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* then near at hand; we muſt neceſſarily in the ſecond Epiſtle underſtand the ſame Thing by the *Power* and *Coming* of our *Lord Jeſus*. Which Power and

Coming

Coming was at the Time of writing the ſecond Epiſtle, ſo far from being over, that it is treated as a Thing to come; and for the Certainty of which St. *Peter* had no better Evidence than the *Word of Prophecy*: Or, if any other Coming of Chriſt is to be underſtood in this ſecond Epiſtle, the ſame muſt be underſtood in the firſt; for the ſecond is but a Vindication of the Doctrine of the firſt. And no Notion common to *both Epiſtles* can be an Objection againſt the ſecond, ſince the firſt was never doubted of in the Church. And indeed, whoever reads the two Epiſtles, and compares them carefully, will ſee ſuch a Concern in the ſecond to ſupport the Sentiments of the firſt, that he will be inclin'd to think, that the ſecond Epiſtle could come from no other Hand, but that which penn'd the firſt.

DISCOURSE II.

LET us proceed to consider the Character which St. *Peter* gives of *Prophecy*, and the *Degree* of Evidence which we may reasonably expect from it. *Prophecy is a Light shining in a dark place, and we do well to give Heed to it until the Day dawn.* St. *Peter*'s Meaning is this, "The Time will come when the Things "you hope for shall be placed in a clear "Light, when you shall see all your Ex- "pectations fully justify'd in the Accom- "plishment; in the mean while ye do "well to attend to Prophecy, tho' but "a small glimmering Light, and shining "at a Distance in a dark Place, yet the

"best

" beſt you have, or can have at preſent ": Metaphorical Expreſſions and Similitudes ought not to be rigidly and ſtrictly canvaſſed, 'tis ſufficient to ſee the general Import and Meaning of them; which in the preſent Caſe is very clear and amounts to this, That the Knowledge God gives us of Things future by the means of Prophecy, is but an imperfect obſcure Knowledge, nothing to be compared to the clear Knowledge that will attend upon the Manifeſtation of the Things themſelves.

I ſhall endeavour to confirm this Propoſition by the Authority of Scripture; and to ſuggeſt ſome Obſervations which may be of Uſe, when we are called upon to judge of the Nature of Prophecy, and the Evidence ariſing from it.

Whether Prophecy be a clear Evidence before the Completion, or no, is no Matter of Controverſy; ſo far from it, that they who tell us Prophecy is the *beſt* Argument even for Chriſtianity, do not yet think it a clear one. But without Regard to any Man's Opinion, it will be proper to ſee what Notion the inſpir-

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ed Writers themſelves had of the Word of Prophecy.

If we look into the firſt Epiſtle of St. *Peter*, we ſhall find that the *antient Prophecies*, of which he ſpeaks in the Text, and which he ſtyles the *more ſure Word of Prophecy*, were not apprehended or clearly underſtood by thoſe inſpired Perſons who delivered them; for there he repreſents them *ſearching what or what manner of Time the Spirit of Chriſt which was in them did ſignify, when it teſtified beforehand the Sufferings of Chriſt, and the Glory that ſhould follow*, i. 11. To the ſame Purpoſe our Saviour ſpeaks, *Matt.* xiii. 17. *Many Prophets and righteous Men have deſired to ſee thoſe Things which ye ſee, and have not ſeen them, and to hear thoſe Things which ye hear, and have not heard them.* St. *Paul* gives the like Account of the Gift of Prophecy under the Goſpel Diſpenſation: *We know in Part, and we propheſy in Part: But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in Part ſhall be done away. Now we ſee thro' a Glaſs darkly; but then Face to Face:*

Face: Now I know in Part; but then ſhall I know even as alſo I am known. 1 Cor. xiii. 9, 10, 12. Now if the Prophets and righteous Men of old to whom the Word of God came, did not clearly underſtand the things which they foretold; but employed themſelves, in ſearching and examining the prophetical Teſtimonies of the Spirit which was in them; if the Prophets of the new Teſtament knew only in Part, and propheſied only in Part, ſeeing but darkly as thro' a Glaſs; 'tis moſt evident that others, in all Appearance leſs qualified than they, to underſtand the determinate Senſe of the Prophecies, cou'd have but a confuſed and indiſtinct Notion of the Things foretold.

The Prophet *Daniel* after a very extraordinary Viſion which he reports in his laſt Chapter, immediately adds, *I heard, but I underſtood not: then ſaid I, O my Lord, what ſhall be the End of theſe Things? And he ſaid, Go thy Way, Daniel: for the Words are cloſed up and ſealed till the Time of the End.* The Anſwer here given to *Daniel*, is very like the Anſwer which our Saviour gave the

the Apoſtles, upon a like Enquiry made by them: They ask, *Lord, wilt thou at this Time reſtore again the Kingdom to Iſrael? And he ſaid unto them, It is not for you to know the Times or Seaſons, which the Father hath put in his own Power*, Acts i. 6, 7. It did belong to them undoubtedly, and to every believing *Jew, to give heed to the Word of Prophecy* according to St. *Peter*'s Exhortation in the Text; and ſince it did not belong to them to know the Times and Seaſons, 'tis evident the Word of Prophecy was not intended to give a clear and diſtinct Light in this Caſe.

Theſe laſt Paſſages relate to ſuch Prophecies eſpecially, as ſeem to deſign the Times and Seaſons of God's Working: And theſe Predictions being oftentimes delayed in the Accompliſhment much beyond the Expectation of thoſe to whom they were delivered, it brought the Prophets and their Predictions frequently into Contempt; and gave the People Occaſion to harden themſelves againſt the Fears and Apprehenſions of the Evils threatened. Hence came the Reproach upon

the Prophets, taken Notice of by *Ezek.* *The Viſion that he ſeeth is for many Days to come; and he propheſieth of the Times that are far off:* xxii. 27. Which Speech grew up into a Proverb; *What is that Proverb that ye have in the Land of Iſrael, ſaying, The Days are prolonged, and every Viſion faileth,* 22. The Caſe is very much the ſame in Regard to other Prophecies. Whoever looks into the Prophetical Writings, will find that they are generally penned in a very exalted Style, full of bold Figures deſcribing the Judgments or the Mercies of God; repreſenting ſpiritual Bleſſings under the Images of temporal Proſperity, and oftentimes ſuch Images as cannot poſſibly admit of a literal Interpretation. In which Caſe tho' we may ſee the general Intent and Meaning, and find ſufficient Ground for Hope and Fear from the Scope of the Prophecy, yet we can with no Certainty fix the preciſe and determinate Manner in which the Words are to be fulfilled.

Prophecy is, by the Author of Prophecy, thus deſcribed: *I have multiplied Viſions, and uſed Similitudes by the Miniſtry*

ſtry of the Prophets. Hoſea. xii. 10, Which Similitudes are elſewhere ſpoken of as *dark Speeches* delivered to the Prophets in *Viſions* and in *Dreams.* Numb. xii. 6, 8. For this Reaſon the *Jews*, when they ſpoke with Contempt of their Prophets, were uſed to ſay, *Doth he not ſpeak Parables?* Ezek. xx. 49. Our Saviour ſeems to ſpeak of the Antient Prophecies under the ſame Character: *Know ye not*, ſays he to his Diſciples, *this Parable? and how then will ye know all Parables?* Mark. iv. 13. That is, if ye underſtand not this plain Parable of the Sower, how will ye underſtand all the Antient Prophecies relating to the Goſpel, which are much harder *Parables?*

Theſe Paſſages are ſufficient to prove, that Prophecy was never intended to be a very diſtinct Evidence; and to ſhew that *Peter*'s meaning in comparing the Word of Prophecy to a Light ſhining in a dark Place, and in making this Evidence ſo much inferior to the Evidence we are to receive, when the Fulneſs of Time comes for the Manifeſtation of God's Promiſes.

But allowing this to be the Caſe of Prophecy at the Time of Delivery, are we not however to expect to find the Prophecy clear and diſtinct, and exactly correſponding to the Event, whenever the Event comes into Exiſtence? and conſequently; is it not abſurd after an Event is come to paſs, to apply any antient Prophecies to it, that do not manifeſtly, to the Eyes of common Senſe, appear to belong to it? Theſe Queſtions being admitted, another will be asked; How comes it to paſs, that many of the Prophecies, applied by the Writers of the Goſpel to our Saviour and his Actions, are ſtill dark and obſcure; and ſo far from belonging evidently to him, and him only, that it requires much Learning and Sagacity to ſhew even now the Connexion between ſome Prophecies and the Events?

In anſwer to theſe Queſtions we muſt obſerve: That the Obſcurity of Prophecy does not ariſe from hence, that it is a Relation or Deſcription of ſomething *future*; for 'tis as eaſy to ſpeak of Things future plainly and intelligibly, as it is of

Things

Things paſt or preſent. The ſame Language ſerves in both Caſes with little Variation. He who ſays, the River will overflow its Banks next Year, ſpeaks as plainly as he who ſays, it did overflow its Banks laſt Year. It is not therefore of the Nature of Prophecy to be obſcure, for it may eaſily be made, when he who gives it thinks fit, as plain as Hiſtory.

On the other Side, a figurative and dark Deſcription of a future Event will be figurative and dark ſtill when the Event happens; and conſequently will have all the Obſcurity of a figurative dark Deſcription as well after as before the Event. The Prophet *Iſaiah* deſcribes the Peace of *Chriſt*'s Kingdom in the following Manner: *The Wolf ſhall dwell with the Lamb, and the Leopard ſhall lye down with the Kid, and the Calf, and the young Lion, and the Fatling together, and a little Child ſhall lead them*, xi. 6. No body, I ſuppoſe (ſome modern *Jews* excepted) ever underſtood this literally; nor can it now be literally applied to the State of the Goſpel; it was, and is capable of different Interpretations: It

may mean temporal Peace; and that either publick of Kingdoms and Nations, or private among the Profeſſors of the Goſpel: It may prefigure an internal and ſpiritual Peace, the Tranquillity of Mind which ſets a Man at Peace with God, himſelf, and the World. But whatever the true Meaning is, this Prophecy expounded by the Rules of Language only, does no more obtrude one determinate Senſe upon the Mind ſince the coming of *Chriſt*, than it did before. But then we ſay, the State of the Goſpel was very properly prefigured in this Deſcription, and is as properly prefigured by an hundred more of the like Kind; and ſince they all agree in a fair Application to the State of the Goſpel, we ſtrongly conclude, that the Goſpel State was the Thing foretold under theſe and many other like Expreſſions. So that the Argument from Prophecy for the Truth of the Goſpel does not reſt upon this, that the Event has neceſſarily limited and aſcertained the particular Senſe and Meaning of every Prophecy; but in this, that every Prophecy has in *a proper* Senſe been compleated by the Com-

Coming of *Chriſt*. 'Tis abſurd therefore to expect clear and evident Conviction from every ſingle Prophecy applied to *Chriſt*, the Evidence muſt ariſe from a View and Compari on of all together.

Prophecies are not all of one Kind, or of equal Clearneſs: The moſt literal Prophecies relating to *Chriſt* were not always at the Time of the Delivery the plaineſt; for many of theſe relating to the moſt ſurprizing and wonderful Events under the Goſpel, wanted not the Veil or Cover of figurative Language; for being plainly foretold, they cou'd hardly, for the ſeeming Incredibility of the Things themſelves, be received and admitted in their true literal Meaning. *A Virgin ſhall conceive a Son*, was a Propoſition which ſeem'd to want ſome other Interpretation than a literal one, which was inconſiſtent with all Experience of the World: And therefore probably this Prophecy was not underſtood by the antient *Jews*, as importing a miraculous Conception. The Event has not made this Prophecy clearer than it was before; the Language of it was as

well underſtood in the Prophets Time as now; but common Senſe led every Man to underſtand it in a Senſe agreeable to Nature and Experience: But the Event has ſhew'd us, that the plain literal Senſe, however inconſiſtent with the Experience of Nature, is the true Senſe. In like Manner the Prophecies from which the Reſurrection of *Chriſt* is inferred, were obſcure and dark from a ſeeming Inconſiſtency between the ſeveral Parts of them. It is foretold, that *Chriſt* ſhou'd be *deſpiſed and rejected of Men*, a Man of *Sorrow* and *Affliction*; that his Affliction ſhou'd purſue him even to the *Grave*; and 'tis alſo foretold, that notwithſtanding theſe Sufferings, and a wretched Death, he ſhou'd *prolong his Days*, and have an *everlaſting Kingdom*, and *ſee* the Work of the Lord *proſper* in *his Hands*. Theſe Prophecies are not at all plainer now than they were in the Beginning: But the plain Senſe appeared at that Time loaded with Contradictions; here was one born to *Miſery and Affliction*, and yet he was the Heir of an *everlaſting Kingdom*: He was *condemn-*

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ed, executed, laid in the *Grave*, and *after all this* he was to *prolong his Days*, and ſee the *Work of the Lord proſper in his Hands*. The Reſurrection of *Chriſt* reconciled all theſe Difficulties, and ſeeming Inconſiſtencies; and we now readily admit theſe Phophecies in their plain literal Senſe; which was a very plain Senſe before, tho' a very hard one to be imagined or believed.

You may obſerve then, that the moſt literal Prophecies have receiv'd the greateſt Confirmation. and the moſt Light from the Event. For the Difficulty in this Caſe not lying in the Darkneſs or Obſcurity of the Expreſſion, but in the ſeeming Impoſſibility of the Thing foretold, ſuch ſeeming Impoſſibility the Event fully clear'd: But no Event can make a figurative or metaphorical Expreſſion to be a plain or a literal one; or reſtrain the Language of any Prophecy to one determinate Senſe only, which was originally capable of many.

I have ſaid thus much to ſhew what Sort of Clearneſs and Evidence we ought to expect from Prophecies after their Accom-

compliſhment: 'Tis a great Prejudice againſt this Argument, when Men come to it expecting more from it than it will yield. This they are led to by hearing it often ſaid, That Prophecy, however dark and obſcure at firſt, grows wonderfully plain upon the Accompliſhment: Which in ſome Caſes, as I have ſhewn, is in Fact true; but is not, cannot be ſo in all Caſes.

You may think it perhaps ſtrange, that I ſhould be here pleading, as it were, for the Obſcurity of antient Prophecies; whereas, you may very well conceive, it would be more to the Purpoſe of a Chriſtian Divine to maintain their Clearneſs. Now as *Moſes* in another Caſe ſaid, *I would to God all the Lord's People were Prophets*; ſo ſay I in this Caſe, I would to God all the Prophecies of the Lord were manifeſt to all his People. But it matters little what we wiſh for, or think beſt, we muſt be content with ſuch Light and Direction as God has thought proper to beſtow on us: And to enquire why the antient Prophecies are not clearer, is like enquiring, why God

has

has not given us more Reaſon, or made us as wiſe as Angels: He has given us in both Caſes ſo much Light as he thought proper, and enough to ſerve the Ends he intended.

It is, doubtleſs, a Miſtake to conceive Prophecy to be intended ſolely or chiefly for their Sakes in whoſe Time the Events predicted are to happen. What great Occaſion is there to lay in ſo long beforehand the Evidence of Prophecy to convince Men of Things that are to happen in their own Times; the Truth of which they may, if they pleaſe, learn from their own Senſes? How low an Idea does it give of the Adminiſtration of Providence, in ſending Prophets one after another, in every Age from *Adam* to *Chriſt*, to imagine, that all this *Apparatus* was for their Sakes who liv'd in, and after the Times of *Chriſt*, with little Regard to the Ages to whom the Prophecies were deliver'd? As I think the Prophecies of the New Teſtament are chiefly for our Sake, who live by Faith and not by Sight; ſo I imagine the antient Prophecies had the like Uſe, and were

were chiefly intended to ſupport the Faith and Religion of the old World. Had it been otherwiſe, a Set of Prophecies given ſome few Years before the Birth of Chriſt, would have ſerv'd our Purpoſe as well as a Series of Prophecies given from the very Beginning, and running thro' every Age.

Let us then conſider the Uſe of Prophecy, and this will help us to conceive the Degree of Clearneſs which ought to attend it. Some People are apt to talk as if they thought the Truth of the Events predicted depended very much upon the Evidence of Prophecy; they ſpeak, for Inſtance, as if they imagin'd the Certainty and Reality of our Saviour's Reſurrection were much concern'd in the Clearneſs of the Prophecies relating to that great and wonderful Event, and ſeem to think that they are confuting the Belief of his Reſurrection, when they are trying to confound the Prophecies relating to it. But can any thing be more abſurd? For what Ground or Pretence is there to enquire, whether the Prophecies foreſhewing that the *Meſſiah* ſhould

die and riſe again, do truly belong to *Chriſt*, unleſs we are firſt ſatisfy'd, that *Chriſt* dy'd, and roſe again? We muſt be in Poſſeſſion of the Fact, before we can form any Argument from Prophecy: And therefore the Truth of the Reſurrection, conſider'd as a Fact, is quite independent of the Evidence or Authority of Prophecy.

The Part which Unbelievers ought to take in this Queſtion, if they would make any Uſe of Prophecy, ſhould be to ſhew from the Prophets, that *Chriſt* was neceſſarily to riſe from the dead; and then to prove, that in Fact *Jeſus* never did riſe: Here would be a plain Conſequence. But if they do not like this Method, they ought to let the Prophecies alone; for if *Chriſt* did not riſe, there is no Harm done if the Prophets have not foretold it: And if they allow the Reſurrection of *Chriſt*, what do they gain by diſcrediting the Prophecies? The Event will be what it is, let the Prophecies be what they will.

There are many Prophecies in the Old Teſtament relating to the *Babyloniſh* Capti-

Captivity, and very diſtinct they are, deſcribing the Ruin of the holy City, the Deſtruction of the Temple, the carrying the Tribes into a diſtant Country, and the Continuance of the Captivity for ſeventy Years. Can you ſuppoſe theſe Prophecies intended to convince the People of the Reality of theſe Events when they ſhould happen? Was there any Danger they ſhould imagine themſelves ſafe in their own Country, when they were Captives at *Babylon*, unleſs they had the Evidence of Prophecy for their Captivity? Or, that they ſhould think their Temple ſtanding in all its Glory, when it was ruin'd before their Eyes? If the Suppoſition be abſurd in this Caſe, 'tis ſo in every Caſe; for the Argument from Prophecy is in all Inſtances the ſame. 'Tis plain then, that Matters related in the Goſpel do not depend for their Reality upon the Evidence of Prophecy; they may be true, tho' never foretold, or very obſcurely foretold; nay, they muſt be admitted as true, before we can ſo much as enquire whether any Prophecy belongs to them.

But if this be the Caſe, that we muſt admit all the Facts of the Goſpel to be true, before we can come at the Evidence of Prophecy, what Occaſion have we, you'll ſay, to enquire after Prophecy at all? Are not the many Miracles of *Chriſt*, his Reſurrection from the dead, his Aſcenſion to Heaven, the Pouring forth the Gifts of the Spirit upon the Apoſtles, their ſpeaking with Tongues, and doing many Wonders in the Name of *Chriſt*, ſufficient Evidence to us of the Truth of the Goſpel, without troubling our ſelves to know whether theſe Things were foretold, or in what manner they were foretold? To anſwer this Queſtion plainly, I think ſuch Facts once admitted to be true, are a compleat Evidence of the divine Authority of a Revelation: And had we known no more of *Chriſt*, than that he claimed to be attended to as a Perſon ſent and commiſſion'd by God, he needed no other Credentials than theſe already mentioned; and it would have been impertinent to demand what Prophet foretold his Coming. For in a like Caſe, who foretold the Coming of

Moſes

Moſes to be a Law-giver to *Iſrael*? God had promiſed *Abraham* to give his Poſterity the Land of *Canaan*; but that he would give it by *Moſes* he had not promiſed; that he would talk with him *Face to Face*, and deliver his Law to him, and by him to the People, he had not foretold: The Authority therefore of *Moſes*, as a divine Lawgiver, ſtands upon the miraculous Works perform'd by him; and the wonderful Atteſtations given to him by the Preſence of God in the Mount, in the Eyes of all the People; but upon Prophecy it does not ſtand, for of him there were no Prophecies. This ſhews that Prophecy is not an Evidence eſſential to the Proof of a divine Revelation; for it may be ſpared in one as well as another.

But the Caſe of the Goſpel differs from that of the Law; for though the Law was not propheſy'd of, yet the Goſpel was; he who delivered the Law was one of the firſt who prophecy'd of the Goſpel, and told the People ſo long beforehand, *That God would raiſe a Prophet like unto him, whom they muſt hear in all Things:*

Things: By which Prediction he guarded the People againſt the Prejudice which his own Authority was like to create againſt a new Lawgiver; telling them beforehand that when the great Prophet came, their Obedience ought to be tranſferred to him. The ſucceeding Prophets ſpeak more fully of the Office, Character, Sufferings, and Glory of the *Saviour* of *Iſrael*, and the *Deſire* of all *Nations*. Now one of the Characters, which our Saviour conſtantly aſſumes and claims in the Goſpel, is this, That he is the Perſon ſpoken of by *Moſes* and the Prophets. Whether he is this Perſon or no, muſt be try'd by the Words of Prophecy; and this makes the Argument from Prophecy ſo far neceſſary to eſtabliſh the Claim of the Goſpel; and it has been very *juſtly*, as well as *acutely* obſerved, that the Proof of this Point muſt rely entirely on the Evidence of Prophecy. Miracles in this Caſe can afford no Help; If the Prophets have not ſpoken of *Chriſt*, all the Miracles in the World will not prove that they have ſpoken of him *(a)*.

(a) Grounds and Reaſons, *Pag.* 31.

These Considerations shew how far the Gospel is necessarily concerned in prophetical Evidence. *Christ* has done the Works which no Man ever did, and given the fullest Evidence of a divine Commission; but he claims to be the Person foretold in the Law and the Prophets: and as Truth must ever be consistent with it self, this Claim must be true, or it destroys all others. This is the Point then to be tryed on the Evidence of Prophecy: Is *Christ* that Person described and foretold under the Old Testament, or no? Whether all the Prophecies relating to him be plain, or not plain; Whether all the Ways used by the Jews of arguing from the Old Testament, be convincing to us, or no, it matters little: The single Question is, Is there enough plain to shew us that *Christ* is the Person foretold under the Old Testament? If there is, we are at an end of our Enquiry, and want no further Help from Prophecy; especially since we, to use St. *Peter*'s Expression, *have in this Case seen the Day dawn, and enjoyed the marvellous Light of the Gospel of God.*

I am

I am not now ſpeaking of the great *Advantage* that may be made of prophetical Evidence for convincing Unbelievers of the Truth of the Goſpel; but am conſidering how far the Truth of the Goſpel *neceſſarily* depends upon this kind of Evidence. Theſe are two very different Enquiries. It is *neceſſary* for us to ſhew that *Chriſt* is the Perſon promis'd to be a Saviour to *Iſrael*; and when we have ſhew'd this, no Oppoſer of the Goſpel has more to demand. But we may carry our Enquiries much further; we may contemplate all the Steps of Providence relating to the Salvation and Religion of Mankind in the ſeveral Ages of the World, and by a Compariſon of all the Parts may diſcern that *Chriſt* was indeed the *End* of the *Law*, and of all Promiſes made to the Fathers: That all the Deliverances given by God to his People were but Shadows, and as it were an Earneſt of the great Deliverance he intended to give by his Son: That all the Ceremonials of the Law were Repreſentations of the Subſtance of the Goſpel: That the *Aaronical* Sacrifices and

Prieſthood were Figures of better Things to come. But theſe Enquiries do not ſtand in the Rank of Things to be *neceſſarily* prov'd to every Believer, they do not enter into the *Principles of the Doctrine of Chriſt*, as the Apoſtle to the *Hebrews* expreſsly tells us; but belong to thoſe *who go on to Perfection:* Which Diſtinction given by the Apoſtle in the fifth and ſixth Chapters to the *Hebrews* is well worth conſidering, as being a Key to open the true Uſe of all typical and allegorical Applications of Scripture.

DISCOURSE III.

IT is neceſſary to take this Matter higher, to look back to the Riſe and Progreſs of Divine Prophecy, and to obſerve what Ends the Wiſdom of God intended to ſerve by Means of it. 'Tis no *Commendation* of Prophecy to ſay, that 'tis very dark and obſcure; nor yet can it be a *Reproach*, provided it anſwers all the Ends deſign'd by Providence. To enable ourſelves therefore to judge of Prophecy, we muſt enquire to what End Prophecy was given: And this is the Subject I now propoſe to your Conſideration.

It will not be ſaid, bec[illegible]e it cannot be maintain'd, That we have any *Right*

to the Knowledge of Things future. God is not oblig'd either in Wiſdom or Goodneſs, and much leſs in Juſtice, to declare to us the Things which ſhall be hereafter. In Regard therefore to the Knowledge of Futurity, whether it be little, or much, or nothing that God thinks fit to communicate to us, we can have no Reaſon to complain; for having no *Right*, we can pretend no *Injury*. Since therefore we have no Demand on God for this Sort of Knowledge in *any* Degree *whatever*, 'tis evident that whenever we have it, we muſt aſcribe our having it to ſome *ſpecial Reaſons* of Providence, which Reaſons alone can limit the Degree of Light and Knowledge, which ought to attend upon the Word of Prophecy: For if we have from Prophecy ſo much Light as fully anſwers the End of giving the Prophecy, I wou'd fain know upon what Reaſon we can form a Complaint for want of more? I mean this, to ſhew how abſurd it is for Men to take Counſel of their Curioſity when they conſider the Uſe and Weight of Prophecy: In this View they will find nothing

thing to ſatisfie them: They may go on for ever asking, Why are we not told more, or more diſtinctly? Which Queſtions we may promiſe to anſwer, whenever they inform us upon what Right they demand to be told any thing; which if they cannot do, all ſuch Complaints muſt be laid aſide; and we muſt come to the only proper and material Conſideration; *What End did the Wiſdom of God propoſe to ſerve by the antient Prophecies, and how has this End been ſerved by them?*

" By Prophecy I underſtand all the " Declarations which God has made con- " cerning the future State of Mankind " in this World, or in the next; conſe- " quently, all the Hopes and Expecta- " tions which are grounded on God's " Promiſes, and do not reſult from Rea- " ſon and natural Knowledge, I refer to " Prophecy, as their Original." If there be any other kind of Prophecy, not comprehended in this Deſcription, there may be perhaps, before we take leave of this Subject, a proper Place to conſider it; but at preſent I ſhall confine my

ſelf within the Limits of this Deſcription.

It cannot be ſuppoſed that God has delivered Prophecies, only to ſatisfy or employ the Curioſity of the Inquiſitive; or that he gave his Spirit to Men merely to enable them to give forth Predictions for the Amuſement and Entertainment of the World. There muſt be ſome End intended *worthy* of the *Author*. What End can you conceive *worthy* of *God*, but the Promotion of Virtue and Religion, and the general Peace and Happineſs of Mankind? Theſe Things belong to him, as Creator and Governour of the World; Theſe Things are his Province.

'Tis true, you'll ſay, theſe Things do belong indeed to God; but what has Prophecy to do with theſe Things? God can govern the World without letting us into his Secrets; and as for Virtue and Religion and our own Happineſs, he has given us a plain Law to walk by, the Reſult of that Reaſon and Knowledge with which he hath endowed us. Prophecy can never contradict or over-rule the

Light

Light of Reaſon and Nature; nor can we ſuppoſe that we came ſo imperfect and unfiniſhed out of the Hands of our Creator, as not to have Light enough to ſee our own Duty, and to purſue our natural Happineſs, but to want at every turn an Admoniſher at our Elbow.

Let us allow the original State of Nature to be as perfect and compleat as you deſire.

But what if the Caſe ſhould be altered? How will Matters ſtand then? 'Tis no unreaſonable Suppoſition, this; for ſince Man was created a moral Agent, with Freedom of Will, it was poſſible for him *to fall*; and conſequently, *poſſibly* he may *have fallen*. Let us ſuppoſe for the preſent this to be the Caſe; and tell us now from natural Religion, what muſt ſuch Sinners do? REPENT, you'll ſay; for 'tis agreeable to the Goodneſs of God to accept Repentance, and to reſtore Offenders to his Favour? Very well; but how often will this Remedy ſerve? May Sin and Repentance go on for ever in a perpetual Round? To allow this, differs nothing from allowing

a Li-

a Liberty and Impunity to ſin without Repentance. If God is Governour and Judge of the World, there muſt be a time for Judgment; and Men may, after all reaſonable and equitable Allowances made, be ripe for Judgment. Let this be the Caſe then, ſuppoſe a Man, after all equitable Allowances made, to be condemned under and by the Law of Nature, and living in daily Expectation of Execution: I ask, what ſort of Religion you would adviſe him to in the mean Time? —— Natural Religion? —— To what Purpoſe? —— He has had his Tryal and Condemnation by that Law already, and has nothing to learn from it but the Miſery of his Condition. I do not mean that the *Senſe* of natural Religion will be loſt in ſuch a Man. He may ſee perhaps, more clearly than ever he did, the Difference between Good and Evil, the Beauty of moral Virtue, and feel the Obligations which a rational Creature is under to his Maker: But what Fruit will all this Knowledge yield? What certain Hope or Comfort will it adminiſter? A Man with a Rope about his Neck may

ſee the Equity and Excellency of the Law by which he dies; and if he does, he muſt ſee that the Excellency of it is, to protect the Virtuous and Innocent; but what is this Excellency to him who has forfeited the Protection of all Law? If you would recommend *natural Religion* excluſively of all other Aſſiſtance, 'tis not enough to ſhew from Principles of Reaſon the *Excellency* and *Reaſonableneſs* of moral Virtue, or to prove from the *Nature* of *God*, that he muſt delight in, and reward Virtue: You muſt go one Step further, and prove from the *Nature* of *Man* too, that he is *excellently* qualify'd to obey this Law, and cannot well fail of attaining all the Happineſs under it, that ever Nature deſigned for him. If you ſtop ſhort at this Conſideration, what do you gain? What imports it, that the *Law* is *good*, if the *Subjects* are ſo *bad*, that either they will not, or cannot obey it? When you prove to Sinners the Excellency of natural Religion, you only ſhew them how juſtly they may expect to be puniſh'd for their Iniquity. A ſad Truth which wants no

Confir-

Confirmation! All the poſſible Hope left, in ſuch a Caſe is, that God may freely pardon and reſtore them; but whether he will or no, the Offenders can never certainly learn from natural Religion.

Should God think fit to be reconciled to Sinners, *natural Religion* would again become the *Rule* of their future Tryal and Obedience; but their *Hopes* muſt flow from *another* Spring; their Confidence in God muſt, and can ariſe only from the *Promiſe* of God; that is, from the *Word* of *Prophecy*; for which Reaſon *Prophecy* muſt for ever be an eſſential Part of *ſuch* a Sinner's Religion.

This Reaſoning agrees exactly with the antienteſt and moſt authentick Account we have of the Beginning of Prophecy in the World. When God had finiſh'd all his Works, and *Man, the chief of them*, he viewed them all, and *behold* they were *very good*. How long *this Goodneſs* laſted we know not, that it did not laſt very long, is certain. During the Time of Man's Innocence there were frequent Communications between God and him, but not the leaſt

Hint

Hint of any *Word* of *Prophecy* delivered to him. The *Hopes* of *Nature* were then *alive* and *vigorous*, and Man had before him the Proſpect of all that Happineſs to which he was created, to encourage and ſupport his Obedience. In this State *natural Religion* wanted no *other* Aſſiſtance, and therefore *it* had no *other*.

But when the Caſe was altered by the Tranſgreſſion of our firſt Parents; when natural Religion had no longer any ſure Hopes or Comforts in Reſerve, but left them to the fearful Expectation of Judgment near at Hand; when God came down to judge the Offenders, and yet with Intention *finally* to reſcue and preſerve them from the Ruin brought on themſelves: *Then* came in the *Word* of *Prophecy*; not in Oppoſition to *natural Religion*, but in *Support* of it; and to convey *new Hopes* to Man, ſince *his own* were irrecoverably loſt and extinguiſhed in the *Fall*.

The Prophecy *then* given being the firſt, and indeed, (as I conceive) the Groundwork and Foundation of all that have

been ſince; It well deſerves our particular Conſideration.

It may be expected perhaps that the Way ſhould be cleared to this Enquiry, by removing firſt the Difficulties which ariſe from the hiſtorical Narration of the Fall; and cou'd any thing *material* be added in Support of what is commonly ſaid upon this Subject, the Time and Pains would be well placed: But the *more* and the *oftner* this Caſe is conſidered in all its Circumſtances, the more will the commonly receiv'd Interpretation prevail; which is evidently the true antient Interpretation of the Jewiſh Church, as appears by the Alluſions to the Hiſtory of the Fall, to be met with in the Books of the old Teſtament.

To ſome Unbelievers, if I miſtake not their Principles, the *Hiſtory of the Fall* would have been altogether as *incredible*, tho' perhaps not quite ſo *diverting*, had it been told in the *ſimpleſt* and *plaineſt* Language.

'Tis to little Purpoſe therefore to trouble them with Account of the *Genius* of the *Eaſtern People*, and their *Language*; for

for you may as ſoon perſuade them, that *a Serpent* tempted *Eve*, as that any evil Spirit did. If you ask, Why the *Devil* might not as well *ſpeak* to *Eve* under the *Form* of a *Serpent*, as give out Oracles to the old *Heathen World* under *that* and many *other Forms*; you gain nothing by the Queſtion; for *Oracles* whether *Heathen* or *Jewiſh* are to them alike; they diſpute, not their *Authority*, but their *Reality*. This is a Degree of Unbelief which has no Right to be admitted to debate the Queſtion now under Conſideration.

As to others, who are not Infidels with regard to Religion in general, yet are ſhocked with the Circumſtances of this Hiſtory; I deſire *them* to conſider, that the *Speculations* ariſing from the Hiſtory of the *Fall*, and the Introduction of *natural* and *moral* Evil into the World, are of all others the moſt abſtruſe and furtheſt removed out of our reach: That this Difficulty led Men in the *earlieſt* Time to imagine two *independent* Principles of *Good* and *Evil*, a Notion deſtructive of the Sovereignty of God; the Maintenance of

of which is the principal End and Design of the *Mosaic* History. Had the History of Man's Fall plainly introduced an *invisible evil Being* to confound the Works of God and to be the *Author* of *Iniquity*, it might have given great Countenance to this Error, of two Principles: Or, to prevent it, *Moses* must have writ an History of the *Angels Fall*, likewise; a Point, I suppose, to which his Commission did not extend, and of which perhaps we are not capable Judges; and since this Difficulty might in a great Measure be avoided by having recourse to the common Usage of the *Eastern Countries*, which was to cloath History in *Parables* and *Similitudes*, it seems not improbable, that for *this Reason* the History of the Fall was put into the Dress, in which we now find *it*.

The *Serpent* was remarkable for an *insidious Cunning*, and therefore stood as a proper Emblem of a *Deceiver*; and yet being one of the *lowest* of the *Creatures*, the Emblem gave no Suspicion of any Power concerned that might pretend to *rival* the *Creator*.

This

This Method has not ſo obſcured this Hiſtory, but that we may with great Certainty come to the Knowledge of all that is neceſſary for us to know. Let us conſider the Hiſtory of *Moſes*, as we ſhould do any other antient *Eaſtern* Hiſtory of like Antiquity: Suppoſe, for inſtance, that this Account of the Fall had been preſerved to us out of *Sanchoniatho*'s *Phœnician* Hiſtory: We ſhould in that Caſe be at a Loſs perhaps to account for every Manner of *Repreſentation*, for every *Figure* and *Expreſſion* in the Story; but we ſhou'd ſoon agree that all theſe Difficulties were imputable to the *Manner* and *Cuſtoms* of his *Age* and *Country*; and ſhould ſhew more Reſpect to ſo *venerable* a Piece of *Antiquity*, than to charge it with *want* of *Senſe*, becauſe we did not underſtand every minute Circumſtance: We ſhould likewiſe agree, that there were evidently *four Perſons* concern'd in the Story; The *Man*, the *Woman*, the *Perſon* repreſented by the *Serpent*, and *God*: Diſagree we could not about their ſeveral Parts. The *Serpent* is evidently the

Tempter; the *Man* and the *Woman* the *Offenders*; *God* the *Judge* of all Three: The *Puniſhments* inflicted on the *Man* and *Woman* have no obſcurity in them; and as to the *Serpent's Sentence*, we ſhould think it reaſonable to give it ſuch a Senſe as the whole Series of the Story requires.

'Tis no unreaſonable Thing ſurely to demand the ſame Equity of you in interpreting the Senſe of *Moſes*, as you would certainly uſe towards any other antient Writer. And if the ſame Equity be allow'd, This *plain Fact* undeniably ariſes from the Hiſtory: "That Man was "tempted to Diſobedience, and did diſ-"obey, and forfeited all Title to Happi-"neſs, and to Life itſelf; that God judged "*him*, and the *Deceiver* likewiſe under "the *Form* of a *Serpent*." We require no more; and will proceed upon this Fact to conſider the Prophecy before us.

The Prophecy is Part of the Sentence paſſed upon the Deceiver; the Words are theſe: *I will put Enmity between thee and the Woman, and between thy Seed and her Seed; It ſhall bruiſe thy Head, and thou ſhalt bruiſe his Heel:*

Gen. iii. 15. Chriſtian Writers apply this to our Bleſſed Saviour, emphatically ſtyled here *the Seed of the Woman*, and who came in the Fullneſs of Time to *bruiſe the Serpent's Head* by deſtroying the Works of the Devil, and reſtoring thoſe to the Liberty of the Sons of God, who were held under the Bondage and Captivity of Sin. You'll ſay, What unreaſonable Liberty of Interpretation is this? Tell us, by what Rules of Language, *the Seed of the Woman* is made to denote *one* particular *Perſon*, and by what Art you diſcover the Myſtery of *Chriſt*'s miraculous Conception and Birth in this common Expreſſion? Tell us likewiſe, how bruiſing the Serpent's Head comes to ſignify the deſtroying the Power of Sin, and the Redemption of Mankind by *Chriſt*? 'Tis no Wonder to hear ſuch Queſtions from thoſe who look no further than to the third Chapter of *Geneſis*, to ſee the Ground of the Chriſtian Application, As the Prophecy ſtands *there*, nothing appears to point out this particular Meaning; much leſs to confine the Prophecy to it. But of this hereafter.

Let us for the preſent lay aſide all our own Notions, and go back to that State and Condition of Things, which was at the Time of the Delivery of this Prophecy; and ſee (if haply we may diſcover it) what God intended to diſcover at that Time by this Prophecy, and what we may reaſonably ſuppoſe our firſt Parents underſtood it to mean.

They were now in a State of Sin, ſtanding before God to receive Sentence for their Diſobedience, and had Reaſon to expect a full Execution of the Penalty threatned, *In the Day thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely die.* But God came in Mercy as well as Judgment, purpoſing not only to puniſh, but to reſtore Man. The Judgment is awful and ſevere; the Woman is doom'd to Sorrow in Conception; the Man to Sorrow and Travel all the Days of his Life; the Ground is curſed for his Sake; and the End of the Judgment is, *Duſt thou art, and to Duſt thou ſhalt return.* Had they been left thus, they might have continued in their Labour and Sorrow for their appointed Time, and at laſt returned

ed to Duſt, without any well-grounded Hope or Confidence in God: They muſt have looked upon themſelves as rejected by their Maker, delivered up to Trouble and Sorrow in this World, and as having no Hope in any other. Upon this Foot, I conceive there could have been no Religion left in the World; for a Senſe of Religion without Hope is a State of Phrenzy and Diſtraction, void of all Inducements to Love and Obedience, or any Thing elſe that is praiſe-worthy. If therefore God intended to preſerve them as Objects of Mercy, it was abſolutely neceſſary to communicate *ſo much Hope* to them, as might be a *rational Foundation* for their future Endeavours to reconcile themſelves to him by a better Obedience. This ſeems to be the *primary* Intention of this firſt divine Prophecy; and it was neceſſary to the State of the World, and the Condition of Religion, which could not poſſibly have been ſupported without the Communication of ſuch Hopes. The Prophecy is excellently adapted to this Purpoſe, and manifeſtly conveyed ſuch Hopes to our firſt Pa-

rents. For let us conſider in what Senſe we may ſuppoſe them to underſtand this Prophecy. Now they muſt neceſſarily underſtand the Prophecy, either according to the literal Meaning of the Words, or according to ſuch Meaning as the whole Circumſtance of the Tranſaction, of which they are a Part, does require. If we ſuppoſe them to underſtand the Words literally; and that God meant them ſo to be underſtood, this Paſſage muſt appear ridiculous. Do but imagine that you ſee *God* coming to *judge* the Offenders; *Adam* and *Eve* before him in the *utmoſt Diſtreſs*; that you hear *God* inflicting *Pains* and *Sorrows* and *Miſery* and *Death* upon the Firſt of human Race; and that in the Midſt of all this Scene of Woe and great Calamity, you hear *God* foretelling with great *Solemnity* a *very trivial* Accident that ſhould ſometimes happen in the World: That Serpents would be apt to bite Men by the Heels, and that Men would be apt to revenge themſelves by ſtriking them on the Head. What has *this Triſle* to do with the *Loſs of Mankind*, with the *Corruption* of the

natural

natural and *moral* World, and the *Ruin* of all the *Glory* and *Happineſs* of the Creation? Great Comfort it was to *Adam*, doubtleſs, after telling him that his Days ſhould be ſhort and full of Miſery, and his End without Hope, to let him know, that he ſhould now and then knock a Snake on the Head, but not even that, without paying dear for his poor Victory, for the Snake ſhould often bite him by the Heel. *Adam*, ſurely, could not underſtand the Prophecy in this Senſe, tho' ſome of his Sons have ſo underſtood it; a plain Indication how much more ſome Men are concerned to maintain a literal Interpretation of Scripture, than they are to make it ſpeak common Senſe. Leaving this therefore as abſolutely abſurd and ridiculous, let us conſider what Meaning the Circumſtances of the Tranſaction do neceſſarily fix to the Words of this Prophecy. *Adam* tempted by his Wife, and ſhe by the Serpent, had fallen from their Obedience, and were now in the Preſence of God expecting Judgment. They knew full well at this Juncture, that their *Fall* was the *Victory*

of the *Serpent*, whom by Experience they found to be an *Enemy* to *God* and to *Man*; to Man, whom he had *ruined* by seducing him to Sin; to God, the noblest Work of whose Creation he had defaced. It could not therefore but be some Comfort to them to hear the Serpent first condemned, and to see that, however he had prevailed against them, he had gained no Victory over their Maker, who was able to assert his own Honour, and to punish this great Author of Iniquity. By this Method of God's Proceeding they were secured from thinking that there was any evil Being equal to the Creator in Power and Dominion; An Opinion which gained Ground in After-times, thro' the Prevalency of Evil: And is, where it does prevail, destructive of all true Religion. The Condemnation therefore of the Serpent was the Maintenance of God's Supremacy; and that it was so understood, we have, if I mistake not, a very antient Testimony in the Book of *Job*: *With God is Strength and Wisdom, the Deceived and the Deceiver are his*: i. e. equally subject to his Command, *Job* xii. 16. The Belief of God's

God's ſupreme Dominion, which is the Foundation of all Religion, being thus preſerved, it was ſtill neceſſary to give them ſuch Hopes as might make them capable of Religion toward God. Theſe Hopes they cou'd not but conceive, when they heard from the Mouth of God that the Serpent's Victory was not a compleat Victory over even themſelves; that they and their Poſterity ſhould be enabled to contеſt his Empire; and tho' they were to ſuffer much in the Struggle, yet finally they ſhou'd prevail and bruiſe the Serpent's Head, and deliver themſelves from his Power and Dominion over them. What now cou'd they conceive this Conqueſt over the Serpent to mean? Is it not natural to expect that we ſhall recover that by Victory, which we loſt by being defeated? They knew that the Enemy had ſubdued them by Sin, cou'd they then conceive Hopes of Victory otherwiſe than by Righteouſneſs? They loſt thro' Sin the Happineſs of their Creation, could they expect leſs from the Return of Righteouſneſs than the Recovery of the Bleſſings forfeited? What elſe but this cou'd they

expect

expect? For the certain Knowledge they had of their Loſs when the Serpent prevailed, could not but lead them to a clear Knowledge of what they ſhou'd regain by prevailing againſt the Serpent. The Language of this Prophecy is indeed in Part metaphorical, but 'tis a great Miſtake to think that all Metaphors are of uncertain Signification; for the Deſign and Scope of the Speaker, with the Circumſtances attending, create a fix'd and determinate Senſe. Were it otherwiſe there wou'd be no Certainty in any Language; all Languages, the *Eaſtern* more eſpecially, abounding in Metaphors.

Let us now look back to our Subject, and ſee what Application we are to make of this Inſtance.

This Prophecy was to our firſt Parents but very obſcure; it was, in the Phraſe of St. *Peter*, but a Light ſhining in a dark Place: All that they cou'd certainly conclude from it was, that their Caſe was not deſperate; that ſome Remedy, that ſome Deliverance from the Evil they were under would in Time appear; but *when*, or *where*, or by *what Means* they cou'd

cou'd not understand: Their own Sentence which return'd them back again to the Dust of the Earth made it difficult to apprehend what this Victory over the Serpent shou'd signify, or how they, who were shortly to be Dust and Ashes, shou'd be the better for it. But after all that can be urged upon this Head to set out the Obscurity of this Promise, I wou'd ask one Question, Was not this Promise or Prophecy, tho' surrounded with all this Obscurity, a Foundation for Religion and Trust and Confidence towards God after the Fall, in Hopes of Deliverance from the Evils introduced by Disobedience? If it was, it fully answered the Necessity of their Case, to whom it was given, and manifested to them all that God intended to make manifest. They cou'd have had towards God no Religion, without some Hopes of Mercy: It was necessary therefore to convey such Hopes; but to tell them how these Hopes shou'd be accomplished, at what Time and Manner precisely, was not necessary to their Religion. And what now is to be objected against this Prophecy? It is very obscure you say;

ſay; ſo it is; but 'tis obſcure in the Points which God did not intend to explain at that time, and which were not neceſſary then to be known. You ſee a plain Reaſon for giving this Prophecy, and as far as the Reaſon for giving the Prophecy extends, ſo far the Prophecy is very plain: 'Tis obſcure only, where there is no Reaſon why it ſhou'd be plain; which ſurely is a Fault eaſily to be forgiven, and very far from being a proper Subject for complaint.

But if this Prophecy conveyed to our firſt Parents only a general Hope and Expectation of Pardon and Reſtoration, and was intended by God to convey no more *to them*; How come we their Poſterity to find ſo much more in this Promiſe than we ſuppoſe them to find? How is it that we pretend to diſcover *Chriſt* in this Prophecy, to ſee in it the Myſtery of his Birth, his Sufferings, and his final Triumph over all the Powers of Darkneſs? By what new Light do we diſcern all theſe Secrets, by what Art do we unfold them?

'Tis no Wonder to me, that ſuch as come to the Examination of the Prophe-

cies

ies applied to *Christ*, expecting to find n each of them some expreſs Character nd Mark of *Christ*, plainly to be under- tood as ſuch antecedently to his Com- ng, ſhou'd ask theſe, or many other the ike Queſtions; or that the Argument rom antient Prophecy ſhou'd appear ſo light and trivial to thoſe who know no better Uſe of it.

Known unto God are all his Works from the Beginning; and whatever Degree of Light he thought fit to communicate to our firſt Parents, or to their Children in After-times, there is no doubt, but that *He* had a perfect Knowledge at all Times of all the Methods by which he intended to reſcue and reſtore Mankind. And therefore all the Notices given by him to Mankind of his intended Salvation, muſt correſpond to the great Event whenever the Fullneſs of Time ſhall make it mani- feſt. No Reaſon can be given why God ſhou'd at all Times, or at any Time clear- ly open the Secrets of his Providence to Men; it depends merely upon his good Pleaſure to do it in what Time, and in what Manner he thinks proper. But there

is a neceſſary Reaſon to be given, why all ſuch Notices as God thinks fit to give ſhou'd anſwer exactly in due Time to the Completion of the great Deſign. It is abſurd therefore to complain of the antient Prophecies for being obſcure, for 'tis challenging God for not telling us more of his Secrets. But if we pretend that God has at length manifeſted to us by the Revelation of the Goſpel, the Method of his Salvation, 'tis neceſſary for us to ſhew that all the Notices of this Salvation, given to the old World, do correſpond to the Things which we have heard, and ſeen with our Eyes. The Argument from Prophecy therefore is not to be formed in this Manner. "All the "antient Prophecies have expreſsly point-"ed out and characterized *Chriſt Jeſus:*" but it muſt be formed in this Manner: "All the Notices which God gave to "the Fathers of his intended Salvation "are perfectly anſwered by the Coming "of *Chriſt:*" He never promiſed or engaged his Word in any Particular relating to the common Salvation, but what he has fully made good by ſending his

is Son to our Redemption. Let us try hese Methods upon the Prophecy be-ore us: If you demand that we ſhou'd hew you *à priori Chriſt Jeſus* ſet forth n this Prophecy, and that God had li-nited himſelf by this Promiſe to con-ey the Bleſſing intended by ſending his wn Son in the Fleſh, and by no other Means whatever: You demand, what I annot ſhew, nor do I know, who can. But if you enquire, whether this Prophe-y in the obvious and moſt natural Mean-ng of it, in that Senſe in which our firſt Parents, and their Children after, might eaſily underſtand it, has been verified by he Coming of *Chriſt*, I conceive it may e made as clear as the Sun at Noon-day, that all the Expectation raiſed by his Prophecy has been completely an-wered by the Redemption wrought by *Chriſt Jeſus*. And what have you to de-ire more than to ſee a Prophecy fulfill-ed exactly? If you inſiſt that the Prophe-cy ſhou'd have been more expreſs; you muſt demand of God why he gave you no more Light; but you ought at leaſt to

ſuſpend

ſuſpend this Demand, till you have a Reaſon to ſhew for it.

I know that this Prophecy is urged further, and that Chriſtian Writers argue from the Expreſſions of it to ſhew that *Chriſt* is therein particularly foretold: He properly is the *Seed of a Woman* in a Senſe in which no other ever was; his Sufferings were well prefigured by *the Bruiſing of the Heel*, his complete Victory over Sin and Death, by *Bruiſing the Serpent's Head.* When Unbelievers hear ſuch Reaſonings they think themſelves entitled to laugh; but their Scorn be to themſelves. We readily allow that the Expreſſions do not imply neceſſarily this Senſe; we allow further, that there is no Appearence that our firſt Parents underſtood them in this Senſe; or that God intended they ſhou'd ſo underſtand them: But ſince this Prophecy has been plainly fulfilled in *Chriſt*, and by the Event appropriated to him only; I wou'd fain know how it comes to be conceived to be ſo ridiculous a Thing in us, to ſuppoſe that God, to whom the whole Event

was

was known from the beginning,(†) ſhould make Choice of ſuch Expreſſions, as naturally conveyed ſo much knowledge as he intended to convey to our firſt Parents, and yet ſhould appear in the Fullneſs of Time to have been peculiarly adapted to the Event which he from the beginning ſaw, and which he intended the World ſhould one Day ſee; and which when they ſhould ſee, they might the more eaſily acknowledge to be the Work of his Hand, by the ſecret Evidence which he had inclos'd from the Days of old in the Words of Prophecy. However the Wit of Man may deſpiſe this Method, yet is there nothing in it unbecoming the Wiſdom of God. And when we ſee this to be the Caſe, not only in this Inſtance, but in many other Prophecies of the old Teſtament, 'tis not with-

(†) *Remember the former things of old, for I am God, and there is none elſe, I am God, and there is none like me: Declaring the End from the Beginning, and from antient Times the Things that are not yet done; ſaying, My Counſel ſhall ſtand, and I will do all my Pleaſure,* Iſa. xlvi. 9. 10.

The Works of the Lord are done in Judgment from the Beginning: And from the Time he made them, he diſpoſed the Parts thereof, Eccluſ. xvi. 26.

out Reaſon we conclude, that under the Obſcurity of antient Prophecy there was an Evidence of God's Truth kept in Reſerve to be made manifeſt in due Time.

As this Prophecy is the firſt, ſo it is the only conſiderable one, in which we have any Concern, from the Creation to the Days of *Noah*. What has been diſcourſed therefore upon this Occaſion, may be underſtood as an Account of the firſt Period of Prophecy. Under this Period the Light of Prophecy was proportioned to the Wants and Neceſſities of the World, and ſufficient to maintain Religion after the Fall of Man, by affording ſufficient Grounds for Truſt and Confidence in God; without which Grounds, which could then no otherways be had but by Promiſe from God, Religion could not have been ſupported in the World. This Prophecy was the grand Charter of God's Mercy after the Fall; Nature had no certain Help for Sinners liable to Condemnation; her Right was loſt with her Innocence: It was neceſſary therefore either to deſtroy the Offenders, or to ſave them by raiſing them to a Capacity of

Salva-

Salvation, by giving them ſuch Hopes as might enable them to exerciſe a reaſonable Religion. So far the Light of Prophecy extended. By what Means God intended to work his Salvation, he did not expreſsly declare; and who has Right to complain that he did not; or to preſcribe to him Rules in diſpenſing his Mercy to the Children of Men? This Prophecy, we, upon whom the later Days are come, have ſeen fully verify'd; more fully than thoſe to whom it was delivered could perhaps conceive. View this Prophecy then, with reſpect to thoſe to whom it was given, it anſwered their Want and the immediate End propoſed by God; view it with reſpect to our ſelves, and it anſwers our's; and ſhall we ſtill complain of its Obſcurity?

The bringing in of *Prophecy* was not the only Change in the State of Religion occaſioned by the Fall. *Sacrifice* came in at the ſame Time, as appears by the Courſe of the Hiſtory; and it is hardly poſſible it ſhould come in, eſpecially at the Time it did, any otherwiſe than upon the Authority of divine Inſtitution.

It is the firſt *Act* of *Religion* mentioned in the ſacred Story to be *accepted* by *God*; which implies ſtrongly that it was of his own Appointment; for we can hardly ſuppoſe that ſuch a Mark of Diſtinction would have been ſet upon a mere *human* Invention. In later Times, when the Account of Things grows clearer, Sacrifice appears to be appointed by God as an *Expiation* for *Sin*; and we have no Reaſon to imagine that it was turned aſide from its original Uſe. There is indeed no expreſs Declaration of the *Uſe* of *Sacrifice* in Religion at its firſt Appearance, and yet ſomething there ſeems to be in the Account that may give Light in this matter: We read that *Cain* brought an *Offering of the Fruit of the Ground*, and *Abel* of *the Firſtlings of his Flock, and the Fat thereof: The Lord had Reſpect unto* Abel *and to his Offering*; *but unto* Cain *and to his Offering he had not Reſpect.* Allowing the Maxim of the *Jewiſh* Church to have been good from the firſt Inſtitution of Sacrifice, *That without Blood there is no Remiſſion*, the Caſe may poſſibly be this

Abel came a Petitioner for Grace and Pardon, and brought the *Atonement* appointed for Sin; *Cain* appears before God as a *juſt Perſon wanting no Repentance*, he brings an *Offering* in Acknowledgment of God's Goodneſs and Bounty, but no *Atonement* in Acknowledgment of his own Wretchedneſs. The Expoſtulation of God with *Cain* favours this Account; *If thou doſt well, ſhalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doſt not well, Sin lieth at thy Door:* i. e. If thou art righteous thy Righteouſneſs ſhall ſave thee; if thou art not, by what Expiation is thy Sin purged? It lieth ſtill at thy Door. Add to this, that the Apoſtle to the *Hebrews* ſays, that *Abel*'s *Sacrifice* was rendered excellent by *Faith:* What could this Faith be, but a Reliance on the Promiſes and Appointments of God? Which Faith *Cain* wanted, relying on his own Well doing.

If you admit this Interpretation, it plainly ſhews that the true Religion inſtituted by God has been *one* and the *ſame* from the Fall of *Adam*, ſubſiſting ever upon the *ſame Principles* of Faith; at

first upon only *general* and *obscure Hopes*, which were gradually opened and unfolded in every Age, till the better Days came, when God thought good to call us into the *marvellous Light of his Gospel*.

This Piece of History is all the Account we have of the Religion of the ante-diluvian World: It was proper to be considered for the Relation there is between Prophecy and the State of Religion in the World; and for this Reason also, that Sacrifice may be found to be one kind of Prophecy, or Representation of the one great Sacrifice once offered for the Sins of the World.

DISCOURSE IV.

WE have ſeen the Beginning of Prophecy, and its firſt Entrance into the World, and what Meaſure of Light and Hope it brought with it. The next Enquiry is, to examine by what Degrees this *Promiſe* was *opened* and *unfolded* in the ſucceeding Ages of the World; and to trace the Methods of divine Providence in preparing all things for its Accompliſhment.

If we conſider the firſt Prophecy as the Foundation of thoſe Hopes, in which all the Sons of *Adam* have an intereſt; in which the Ages yet to come, as well as the preſent and thoſe already paſt, are concerned; we ſhall not wonder to find

that the Adminiſtrations of Providence have had in all Ages relation to this Prophecy, and ſhall have, till the End of all things brings with it the appointed Time for the full Accompliſhment.

One thing, I preſume, will be eaſily granted becauſe it cannot be eaſily deny'd; that if the antient Prophecies which concern the general State and Condition of Man with regard either to this World or the next, are indeed *divine* Oracles, there muſt be a Conſiſtency in the whole; and how dark or obſcure ſoever ſome Part of them might be at the firſt Delivery, and for Generations afterwards, yet muſt they in the Event conſpire and centre in that great End which was always in the View of Providence: *Known unto God are all his Works from the Beginning of the World*, Acts xv. 18.

Taking then this prophecy to contain the Purpoſe of God with reſpect to Mankind; the Adminiſtrations of Providence, together with ſuch further Declarations as God thought fit to make, muſt needs be the beſt Comment to help us to its Meaning.

The

The Account we have of the antediluvian World is very ſhort, and conveys but little Knowledge to us of the Religion of thoſe Times, or of the Hopes and Expectations then entertained: Yet ſomething there is to ſhew that the Curſe of the Fall was remember'd and felt during that Period; and that thoſe who preſerved a Senſe of Religion, had an Expectation of being delivered from the Curſe; which could be grounded, as far as appears, upon nothing but the Prophecy already mention'd.

Noah was born in the eleventh Century after the Fall, and at the Time of his Birth, his Father *Lamech*, by the Spirit of Prophecy, declared, *This ſame ſhall comfort us concerning our Work and Toil of our Hands, becauſe of the Ground which the Lord hath curſed*, Gen. v. 19.

This Paſſage is a very material one, and, conſider'd in all its Views, will give ſome Light to the State and Condition of the World during this Period. We may, I think, from hence fairly collect; 1. That the Curſe upon the Ground ſubſiſted in all its Rigour to the Days

of

of *Lamech*; and that the Work and Toil neceſſary to raiſe from the Ground a ſufficient Support for Life, was a grievous and irkſome Burden. There is no reaſon to imagine, but that *Lamech* had as good a Share of the Things of the World as any other in his Time; and yet he ſpeaks of the Labour and Toil of Life, much more like a Man reporting what he had *felt*, than what he had *only ſeen*. 2. That there was an Expectation in his Time, at leaſt among thoſe who had not quite forgot God, of a Deliverance from the Curſe of the Fall. *Lamech*'s Prophecy does not introduce this Expectation, but is grounded upon it: He ſeems to ſpeak to ſuch as had the ſame common Hope with himſelf of a Deliverance to come; and points out to them *the Child* then born as the Inſtrument deſigned by Providence to eaſe them of their Burden. *THIS SAME ſhall comfort us*: i. e. This is the *Seed* of the *Woman*, the *Heir* of the *Promiſe*, the Effect of which ſhall be ſeen in his Time. 3. That the ancient Expectation, founded on the Prophecy given at the Fall, was not of an

immediate

immediate and *ſudden* Deliverance. Above a thouſand Years were paſſed from the Curſe to the Birth of *Noah*, and yet the Expectation of Deliverance continued; whereas, had the Notion been, that the Prophecy was to be immediately fulfilled, the Delay had been long enough to tire out their Patience and their Hopes. 4. That the antient Expectation was not that the World ſhould be delivered *all at once* from the *whole* Curſe of the Fall. *Lamech*, who ſo well remember'd the Lord's *Curſe* upon the *Ground*, cannot be ſuppoſed to forget the *greater Curſe* upon *Man*: *Duſt thou art, and to Duſt thou ſhalt return.* And yet from *this Part* of the Curſe he gives no Hopes of Deliverance; *Noah* was not that Seed, who ſhould bring *Life* and *Immortality* to *Light*; of him he only foretells, that he ſhould *ſave* them from the *Labour and Toil of their Hands*; and leaves the Hopes of Deliverance from the *greater Curſe* to ſtand as they did, upon the Faith of the firſt Prophecy. This Notion of a *gradual* Deliverance from the old Curſe is agreeable to all that has happened

happened ſince, and to the preſent State of Things under the Goſpel: It is frequently to be met with in the inſpir'd Writers, particularly in St. *Paul*, who tells us, *THE LAST Enemy that ſhall be deſtroyed is Death.*

In Conſequence of this Expoſition of the Prediction of *Lamech*, it muſt be maintain'd, that the Prophecy has been verify'd in the Event: That the Earth has been reſtored from the Curſe laid on it at the Fall, and now enjoys the Effect of the Bleſſing beſtowed on *Noah*. There will ariſe many Prejudices, I am ſenſible, againſt this Notion now advanced. In the firſt Place, the Prophecy which was given at the Fall, has been uſually appropriated to *Chriſt Jeſus*, and to the Deliverance we expect from him by the Reſtauration of Life and Immortality; and it may be thought perhaps no good Service to give any other Perſon a Share in this Prophecy.

In anſwer to this, I have ſome few Obſervations to offer. 1. That the *Curſe* of the *Fall* manifeſtly conſiſts of ſeveral Parts: Man was doom'd to a Life of

Labour and Sorrow here, the Ground curſed for his Sake, and he condemned to ſeek his Food in the Sweat of his Brow; and after this Life ended he was ſentenced to return to the Duſt from whence he was taken. 2. The Prophecy given as a Support to Man under this Curſe mentions no kind of Deliverance particularly, but conveys a general Hope; which is limited to no one Circumſtance of the Curſe more than another; and is therefore naturally underſtood to relate to the Whole. 3. Should there appear reaſon ſufficient to induce us to think that this Prophecy has already, in Part, had its Completion, and that *one Part* of the *Curſe* has been already removed; it will be ſo far from weakening, that it will mightily ſupport and ſtrengthen our Hopes of ſeeing the Whole removed in God's own Time. 4. It ought to be no Objection, that this Prophecy is ſuppoſed to point out more Events, or more Perſons than one. This is according to the Analogy of antient Prophecies. And why may not this Prophecy mean *Noah* and *Chriſt*, as well as many others mean

David

David and *Chriſt*, *Solomon* and *Chriſt*, &c?

Another Prejudice will ariſe from the common Notion of the preſent and paſt State of the Earth. Inſtead of ſeeing any Alteration for the better, according to the Prophecy of *Lamech*, Men think they ſee an Alteration for the worſe in every Age: Nature ſeems to them to be almoſt ſpent and worn out, and leſs able to provide for her Children now than formerly. Theſe are the Sentiments of the preſent Age, and they were ſo of thoſe paſt: We meet with many Reflexions of this Kind in grave and ſerious Authors: St. *Cyprian*, I remember, complains that Things were ſenſibly grown worſe even in the Compaſs of his own Time; That the Seaſons of the Year were not ſo pleaſant, nor the Fruits of the Earth ſo delightful and refreſhing as he remembred them. I wonder not at his Judgment; for I find myſelf every Day growing into the ſame Opinion. The beſt and the choiceſt Fruits ſerved up at the Tables of the Great, have no ſuch Reliſh as thoſe, which they once provided for themſelves

themſelves when they were young: And many there are who can now find but few Days good enough to be abroad, who yet can remember when there were few bad enough to keep them at home. Such obſervations therefore as theſe ſhew how much men alter themſelves; but they ſhew nothing elſe.

But this Prejudice has a greater Support from antient Tradition: We read of a *Golden Age* when Peace and Plenty reigned, when Fraud and Violence were little known. The old Writers to whom we are indebted for this Piece of Knowledge, ſet off the Story by mixing with it great Complaints of their own Times; that *Iron Age*, as they call it, in which they lived. From theſe Authorities many have been led to think that the *Curſe* upon the Earth has been ever growing and ſhall grow till the End of all Things.

But it ought to be conſidered, that the moſt antient Writers, to whom we are beholden for theſe Accounts, lived at ſuch a Diſtance of Time from the Flood, that we may very well ſuppoſe that they had little Knowledge of any Antiquity beyond it.

it. They might well call the Times ſoon after the Flood antient Times, for ſo they were with reſpect to their own; and there is no Pretence for thinking that they knew any thing of the Manner of Living before the Flood. They might poſſibly have ſome obſcure Tradition of the Paradiſiacal State; but if they had, they confounded it with their Golden Age, which plainly was a very different Thing. Now the Ages next the Flood afforded ground enough for this antient Tradition, without ſuppoſing any ſuch Alterations in the State of the Earth as are commonly imagined. The Earth was in a poor Condition indeed after the Flood, if it cou'd not afford Plenty for the few Inhabitants; and what Occaſion was there for Fraud and Violence when every Man had more than enough? When Men encreaſed and the Earth was divided in Property, the Caſe altered; ſome had more than enough, and ſome much leſs, and every Man grew concerned to be rich, and applied to the Arts of Fraud, or to open Violence, as they beſt ſerved his Purpoſe. Here then is

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the *Golden Age*; and here is the *Iron Age*. The first happy State continued even to *Abraham*'s Time; He and *Lot* were Strangers in the Land of *Canaan*, they had great Flocks and Herds with them; and yet what Plenty did they enjoy? When their Servants quarrelled about some Conveniencies in feeding their Cattle, *Abraham*, as if he had been Lord of the whole Soil, offers *Lot* his Choice of the Country for his Cattle. *Is not the whole Land before thee —— If thou wilt take the left Hand, then will I go to the right; or if thou depart to the right Hand, then I will go to the left.* Such a Dispute in these Days wou'd be attended probably with Strife and Violence, with Fraud and Deceit, and perpetual Feuds and Animosities between the contending Parties: In *Abraham*'s Time the very Plenty the World enjoyed put an end to the Quarrel; not that the World is worse now than it was antiently, but Men are now so multiplied, and the Earth so divided and settled in Property, that private Men are not left to their Choice to settle where they please. Some small Parts of the

Earth, lying near Towns, and Places of Habitation, were in *Abraham*'s Time poſſeſſed in Property, as we learn from the Purchaſe which he made of a Burying-place. But he was no purchaſer or Proprietor of the Country where he fed his Cattle, and yet he met with no Diſturbance.

Setting aſide therefore theſe Prejudices, let us examine what the Truth of the Caſe is according to the beſt Light now remaining.

If you conſult Interpreters for the Meaning of *Lamech*'s Prediction; ſome will tell you that *Noah* found out proper Tools and Inſtruments of Husbandry, which was a great Abatement to the Labour and Toil of Tillage: But of this there is no Proof; and 'tis much more likely, that a Deſcendent of *Cain*'s was the Inventor of ſuch Tools, than that *Noah* was. We read nothing of *Noah*'s Skill in this way; but we read of *Tubal Cain*, that he was an *Inſtructor of every Artificer in Braſs and Iron:* And can it be imagined that there were Artificers in *Iron* ſo early as *Tubal Cain*, and no Application-

plication of the Art to the Works of Husbandry till *Noah*'s Time? Some will tell you, that *Noah* first invented the Art of making Wine; a Liquor that chears the Heart, and makes Men forget Sorrow and Trouble; but neither for this is there any Proof. We read that after the Flood, he *began to be an Husbandman and planted a Vineyard*; but as he was not the *first Husbbandman* in the World, so neither can it be concluded from hence that he was the *first Vine Dresser*.

Others are of Opinion that there is nothing prophetical in *Lamech*'s Declaration, and that he had no View but to the Circumstances of his own Family. He rejoiced, they say, to see a Son born who might in time be assisting to him in the Toil of Cultivating the Ground. According to this Interpretation, *Noah* was so far from being marked out as the Person who shou'd alleviate the Labour and Toil of the World, that his Father rejoiced only that he was come to take his Share of it, and to be his Fellow-Labourer. But is there any thing in this, particular to *Noah*? Is not every Son born

to assist his Father? And may not *Lamech*'s Words be applied by every Father at the Birth of every Son? Why then is this Speech reported of *Lamech* only? Why is a *peculiar* Name, with reference to this Declaration, given to *Noah*, if there was no *peculiar* Reason for it?

The *Jewish* Interpreters are generally agreed to expound the Words of *Lamech*, as importing a Deliverance to be granted from the Labour and Toil of Tillage, occasioned by the Curse on the Ground: And some of them suppose the Words to have a Regard to the Restoration of the World through *Noah* and his Sons. But the Scripture itself will be our best Guide in this Case, thither let us go.

Lamech foretells that his Son *Noah* shou'd *comfort them concerning the Work and Toil of their Hands, because of the Ground which the Lord had cursed.* When God informs *Noah* of his Design to destroy the World, he adds, *But with thee will I establish my Covenant.* *Lamech* expected in Virtue of God's Promise a Deliverance from the *Curse* of the *Earth*, and foresees that the Deliverance

wou'd come through his Son. When God threatens to deſtroy the Earth and complete the Curſe he had laid on it, he thinks upon his Covenant, and promiſes *Noah* the Benefit of it: What Covenant was this that had ſuch immediate relation to the Deſtruction of the World? What cou'd it be but the very Promiſe which *Lamech* ſaw ſhou'd be made good to *Noah*; and which is here actually conveyed to *Noah* by a new Promiſe? The Words; *I will eſtabliſh my Covenant*, muſt relate to a Covenant then ſubſiſting, and not to a Covenant afterwards to be made; as will be evident to thoſe who will examine the Import of this Phraſe in Scripture. But to proceed;

The Flood being over, God declares, *I will not again Curſe the Ground any more for Man's ſake.* It appears from this Declaration, 1. That the Flood was the Effect of that Curſe which was denounced againſt the Earth for Man's ſake. 2. That the *old* Curſe was fully executed and accompliſhed in the Flood. In Conſequence of which Diſcharge from the Curſe, a *new* Bleſſing is immediately pro-

nounced upon the Earth; *While the Earth remaineth, Seed-time and Harveſt, and Cold and Heat, and Summer and Winter, and Day and Night ſhall not ceaſe*, Gen. viii. 22. This is called a *Covenant* between *God* and the *Earth*; Ch. ix, ℣. 13. And a Covenant with *Noah* and his Seed, and with *every living Creature, of the Fowl, of the Cattle*, and *of every Beaſt* of the Field, ℣. 8, 9, 10. and in Truth a Bleſſing on the Earth, is properly a Bleſſing not only on Man, but on all living Creatures which ſubſiſt on the Earth; and tis with Reſpect to this firſt Covenant that the *Pſalmiſt* breaks forth into the Admiration of God's Goodneſs. *Thy Mercy, O Lord, is in the Heavens, and thy Faithfulneſs reacheth unto the Clouds. Thy Righteouſneſs is like the great Mountains, thy Judgments are a great Deep: O Lord, thou preſerveſt MAN and BEAST!* Pſal. xxxvi. 5, 6.

When *Adam* was firſt formed and placed on the Earth, he had ſeveral Bleſſings and Privileges conferred on him by God. Theſe were forfeited by the Fall. What will you ſay if you ſee theſe very Bleſ-

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ſings reſtored again to *Noah* and his Poſterity after the Flood? Whether this be the Caſe or no, will ſoon appear upon a Compariſon of the Bleſſings given to *one* and the *other*. To *Adam* and *Eve* God ſaid; *Be fruitful, and multiply, and repleniſh the Earth:* Gen. i. 28. To *Noah* and his Sons he ſays, *Be fruitful and multiply, and repleniſh the Earth.* Gen. ix. 1. To our firſt Parent it is ſaid; *Have Dominion over the Fiſh of the Sea, and over the Fowl of the Air, and over every living Thing that moveth on the Earth:* Gen. i. 28. To *Noah* and his Sons it is ſaid; *The Fear of you, and the Dread of you, ſhall be upon every Beaſt of the Earth, and upon every Fowl of the Air, and upon all that moveth upon the Earth, and upon all Fiſhes of the Sea; into your Hand are they delivered.* Gen. ix. 2.

To *Adam and Eve* are granted for Food, *every Herb bearing Seed —— and every Tree, in the which is the Fruit of a Tree yielding Seed:* Gen. i. 29. *Noah* and his Sons have a larger Charter —— *Every moving Thing that liveth ſhall be Meat for you, even as the green Herb, have I*

given you all Things. Gen. ix. 3. The Bleſſing upon the Earth at the Creation was; *Let the Earth bring forth Graſs, and Herb yielding Seed, and the Fruit Tree yielding Fruit after his Kind, whoſe Seed is in itſelf upon the Earth:* Gen i. 11. The Bleſſing after the Flood is; *While the Earth remaineth, Seed time and Harveſt ſhall not ceaſe.* Gen. viii. 22. In the Beginning, *The Lights in the Firmament were appointed to divide the Day from the Night, and to be—— for Seaſons, and for Days and Years:* Gen. i. 14. After the Flood the new Bleſſing is, *That Cold and Heat, and Summer and Winter, and Day and Night ſhall not ceaſe.* Gen. viii. 22. Tell me now what is there beſtowed in the firſt Bleſſings, that is wanting in the Second? What more did *Adam* enjoy in his happieſt Days, what more did he forfeit in his worſt, with reſpect to this Life, than what is contain'd in theſe Bleſſings? If he neither had more, nor loſt more, all theſe Bleſſings you ſee expreſsly reſtored to *Noah* and his Poſterity; and can you ſtill believe that the Curſe upon the Earth remains?

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All this laid together amounts, I think, to this; That the old Curſe upon the Ground was finiſhed and completed at the Deluge. And when the whole Race of Men, eight only excepted, were deſtroyed, the Serpent had ſufficiently bruiſed the Heel of the Woman's Seed; and the Time was come to relieve the World with reſpect to this Part of the Curſe ſo fully executed; accordingly a Bleſſing is *once more* pronounced on the Earth; and a Covenant of temporal Proſperity confirmed to *Noah*, and by him to all Mankind; making good the Prophecy of his Father at the Time of his Birth; *This ſame ſhall comfort us*, &c.

You may think perhaps that we ſee but little Effect of this *new* Bleſſing; that the Life of Man is ſtill Labour and Toil; that he ſtill eats the Bread of Sorrow and Carefulneſs in the Sweat of his Brow; and that the Earth ſtill abounds in Thorns and Thiſtles. Such Complaints as theſe are but the Effect of Prejudice: Men ſpeak in this Caſe, as if they thought there were no Thorns and Thiſtles till after the Fall, but that they were created

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on Purpoſe to be a Curſe; for if there were ſuch things (as undoubtedly there were) before the Fall, why ſhould you expect to have them removed by the Reſtoration of the Earth?

For what Employment do you imagine Man was made? For *a little Sleep, a little ſlumber, and a little folding of the Hands to ſleep?* Surely this was not the Caſe: Even in Paradiſe, it was *Adam's* Buſineſs to dreſs and to keep the Garden, how much Labour this required we cannot tell; ſome it required without doubt. After the Fall, Labour increaſed and multiplied, and continued to be very burdenſome unto the Time of the Flood: And God's Promiſe of regular Seaſons after the Flood, ſeems to intimate that they were very irregular and confuſed before: Which one Circumſtance will account for all the Change we ſuppoſe. What the Caſe was in the old World during the Curſe, may probably be collected from the Curſe denounced againſt *Iſrael* when diſobedient: *I will break the* Pride *of their Power*; *and* I will *make your Heaven as Iron, and your Earth as Braſs, and your Strength*

Strength ſhall be ſpent in vain: For your Land ſhall not yield her Increaſe, neither ſhall the Trees of the Land yield their Fruits, Levit. xxxvi. 19, 20.

There are ſerious Writers who think that the Earth was very much damaged and rendered leſs fertile by the Flood: But is it not obvious to obſerve, that this Judgment ought to be grounded on the Knowlede not only of the preſent State of the Earth, but alſo of the State before the Flood; for whoever compares two Things together, and judges upon that Compariſon, muſt be ſuppoſed to know them both; and yet 'tis certain that we know nothing of the antediluvian State, but this only, that it was a very bad one; which is not enough to ſupport us in judging, that the preſent State is a much worſe.

We meet with frequent Alluſions to this Covenant with *Noah* in later Times, and later Books of Scripture: The Son of *Sirach* tells us, *That an everlaſting Covenant was made with him*, xliv. 18. Διαθηκαι αἰωνος. (Gr.) *Teſtamenta Seculi*, (Vulg.) The *Covenant* of the *Age* was given

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en him: For *Noah* was the *Father* of the *Age*, and had the *Covenant* of the *Age* after the Flood, in like manner as *Chriſt* was the *Father*, and brought in the *new Covenant* of the ſucceeding *Age*.

The Prophet *Jeremiah* introduces God appealing to his own Fidelity in the Execution of this firſt Covenant, as a Reaſon why he ought to be truſted and relied on for the Performance of the Second. *If you can break my Covenant of the Day, and my Covenant of the Night,* —— *then may alſo my Covenant be broken with* David *my Servant, that he ſhould not have a Son to reign upon his Throne,* xxxiii. 20, 21. and ℣ 25. In like manner the Prophet *Iſaiah, This is as the Waters of* Noah *unto me: For as I have ſworn that the Waters of* Noah *ſhould no more go over the Earth; ſo have I ſworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee,* liv. 9. The lxv^th^ *Pſalm* ſeems to be a Comment upon God's Covenant with *Noah: Thou makeſt the Outgoings of the Morning and Evening to rejoice. Thou viſiteſt the Earth, and watereſt it:* —— *Thou crowneſt the Year with thy Goodneſs,*

neſs, and thy Paths drop Fatneſs. —— The Paſtures are cloathed with Flocks; the Vallies alſo are covered over with Corn; they ſhout for Joy, they alſo ſing. It ſeems alſo to be with reference to this Covenant that the *Pſalmiſt* appeals to God's *Faithfulneſs in the Clouds*, to his *Mercy eſtabliſh'd in the Heavens*, and to the *Moon the faithful Witneſs in Heaven.* Wiſdom and Power and Goodneſs are ſhewn forth in the Creation, but *Mercy* and *Faithfulneſs* relate to God's Dealings with Men: and when we hear of his *Faithfulneſs* in the *Clouds*, it naturally leads us to think of his Promiſe for *Seed-time* and *Harveſt*, for the *former* and the *latter Rain*; Things evidently depending upon the *Government* of the *Clouds.*

During the *Age* of this Covenant, the Character by which God was known, and applyed to, was relative to this Covenant, and the Bleſſings of it; —— *Unto God wou'd I commit my Cauſe, which doth great Things and unſearchable; marvellous Things without Number; who giveth Rain upon the Earth, and ſendeth Waters*

Waters upon the Fields, Job v. 8, 9, 10. *Sing Praiſe upon the Harp unto our God, who covereth the Heaven with Clouds, who prepareth Rain for the Earth, who maketh Graſs to grow upon the Mountains. He giveth to the Beaſt his Food, and to the young Ravens which cry*, Pſalm cxlvii. 7, 8, 9. — *Let us now fear the Lord our God that giveth Rain, both the former and the latter in his Seaſon: He reſerveth unto us the appointed Weeks of the Harveſt* Jer. v. 24. To the ſame Purpoſe and with reſpect to the ſame Times the Apoſtles *Paul* and *Barnabas* tell the People at *Lyſtra*, *That God in Times paſt ſuffered all Nations to walk in their own Ways, nevertheleſs he left not himſelf without Witneſs, in that he did good, and gave us Rain and fruitful Seaſons filling our Hearts with Food and Gladneſs*, Acts xvi. 17. Our bleſſed Saviour does likewiſe commend and extol the Mercy of God in the Works of this firſt Covenant: *He maketh his Sun to riſe on the Evil and on the Good, and ſendeth Rain on the Juſt and on the Unjuſt*. Which Words are directly a Com-

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nent upon the Terms of *Noah*'s Cove-
ant for fruitful Seaſons, which were to
ontinue without being interrupted again
or the ſake of Man's Iniquity; or as the
ext it ſelf expreſſes it, *Though the Ima-
ination of Man's Heart is evil from
is Youth*, Gen. viii. 21. With Reſpect
o this Covenant of temporal Bleſſings
iven to *Noah*, and to the ſecond Cove-
ant of future Glory given to *Chriſt*, muſt
t. *Paul* be underſtood to ſpeak, when
e ſays; *Godlineſs is profitable to all
hings, having Promiſe of the Life that
ow is, and of that which is to come.* In
ny other View the Words are capable
f no Expoſition conſiſtent with Ex-
erience; or with the Admonitions of
he Goſpel, which warn the Righteous
o expect Sufferings in this World: But
rue it is, that for Godlineſs ſake *the
Promiſe of the Life that now is* was
onfirmed with *Noah*; and for the ſame
Reaſon was the Covenant of better Hopes
onfirmed with *Chriſt*.

Theſe Alluſions, and many more, ſup-
poſe a Reſtoration of the Earth after the
Flood, and a new Bleſſing given to it in

virtue of God's Covenant; and without this Supposition I know not how to account for some Passages in Scripture which speak of the Goodness of the Earth, and the great Plenty it affords. How comes it to pass that *this very Earth* cursed with Barrenness, and to be a Nursery for Thorns and Thistles, is afterwards represented as flowing with Milk and Honey, abounding with Oil and Wine, and every thing usefull and pleasant in Life? Can you imagine this Land of Plenty to be Part of the cursed Earth, doom'd to bear Thorns and Thistles, and to weary out its inhabitants with Toil and Labour? Yet this is the Case, if no Alteration has happened; and it will be no easy Work to reconcile these Contradictions. But if the Curse upon the Earth was expiated at the Flood; if the Earth has been *once more blessed* by its Creator, there wants no Art or Invention to solve this Difficulty: The Thing speaks for it self.

I will leave this Point upon these Reasons: whether they are sufficient to establish an Opinion so contrary to the Prejudices of Mankind, I know not; they seem

ſeem to me at leaſt to be worth conſidering.

Let us conſider now the State of Prophecy after the Flood, and upon what Foot the Religion of the new World ſubſiſted.

I find no new Prophecy given to *Noah* after the Flood, nor to any of his Children till the Call of *Abraham*. The Reaſon of it ſeems to be this; the Power and Sovereignty of God were ſo manifeſtly diſplayed in the Deluge, and made ſo ſtrong Impreſſions upon the few Perſons then alive, and came ſo well atteſted to the ſucceeding Generation, that Religion wanted no other Support: When Idolatry prevailed, and the World was in Danger of being quite loſt to true Religion, without the Interpoſition of God, the Word of Prophecy was renewed; as we ſhall find when we come to that Period.

It may ſeem ſurpriſing perhaps, that after ſo great a Revolution in the World, as the Deluge made, God ſhould ſay nothing to the Remnant of Mankind, of the Puniſhments and Rewards of another

Life; but ſhou'd make a new Covenant with them relating merely to fruitful Seaſons, and the Bleſſings of the Earth. All that I can ſay to this Difficulty, is this; I think I ſee plainly, a gradual working of Providence towards the Redemption of the World from the Curſe of the Fall; that the temporal Bleſſings were firſt reſtored, as an Earneſt and Pledge of better Things to follow; that the *Covenant of the Age* given to *Noah* had, ſtrictly ſpeaking, nothing to do with the Hopes of Futurity, which were reſerved to be the Matter of *another Covenant*, in *another Age*, and to be revealed by him, whoſe Province it was *to bring Life and Immortality to Light through the Goſpel.*

The Law of *Moſes*, though a divine Revelation, and introduced to ſerve and advance the great Ends of Providence with reſpect to Mankind, yet being given in the *Age* of the firſt Covenant, was in all Things made conformable to it; and was founded in no other *expreſs* Promiſes, than thoſe of temporal Happineſs and Proſperity; in no other *expreſs* Threatnings, than thoſe of temporal Loſs

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and Miſery. *Abraham*'s temporal Covenant was the ſame in kind with *Noah*'s, though much enlarged and re-eſtabliſhed upon further Promiſes and Aſſurances: As the Curſe upon the Ground for the Wickedneſs of *Cain*, was of the very ſame kind with the Curſe of the Fall; differing from it not in Kind but in Degree.

But though the firſt Covenant given to *Noah*, and the Law of *Moſes* founded upon the Terms of that Covenant, contain no expreſs Promiſes of future Rewards, yet is it not to be imagined that all who lived under this Covenant were void of ſuch Hopes, and Expectations. If there were any ſuch Hopes before the Flood, grounded upon the Prophecy conſequent to the Fall, the coming in of the Flood could not deſtroy them; and the Covenant of temporal Bleſſings given to *Noah* was ſo far from ſuperſeding better Hopes, that it did mightily ſtrengthen and confirm them. For if *Noah* and his Forefathers expected Deliverance from the whole Curſe of the Fall, the actual Deliverance from one Part of it was a

very good Pledge of a further Deliverance to be expected in due Time. Man himself was curſed, as well as the Ground; he was doom'd to return to Duſt; and fruitful Seaſons are but a ſmall Relief, compared to the Greatneſs of his Loſs; but when fruitful Seaſons came, and one Part of the Curſe was evidently abated, it gave great Aſſurance that the other ſhould not laſt for ever.

That *Noah* had ſuch Expectations himſelf, and tranſmitted them to his Poſterity ſeems evident from the peculiar Bleſſing which he beſtows on *Shem*. *Bleſſed*, ſays he, *be the Lord God of* Shem: Canaan *ſhall be his Servant*. *God ſhall enlarge* Japhet, *and he ſhall dwell in the Tents of* Shem. Gen. ix. 26, 27. Why the God of *Shem*, and not the God of *Japhet*? As to the Behaviour of theſe two Sons toward their Father it was the ſame; they joined in the pious Office done to him; in this reſpect then they were equal, and equally deſerving of a Bleſſing; if any Preference was due to either from the Father, it was to *Japhet* his Firſt-born; for ſo he was, though commonly laſt named when

when the Sons of *Noah* are mentioned together. This being the Caſe, how comes *Shem* to be preferr'd? And what is the Bleſſing convey'd to him? The temporal Covenant it could not be, for that was before confirmed with *all* the Sons of *Noah*. Day and Night, Summer and Winter, Seed-time and Harveſt, were a common Gift to the World, beſtowed, as our bleſſed Lord obſerves, *on the Evil as well as on the Good*. The Bleſſing therefore peculiar to *Shem* was no Part of the temporal Covenant; nor was it any thing in the Power of his Father to beſtow; for then his elder Brother, equally obedient and reſpectful to his Father, muſt have been ſerved before him. Of what other Bleſſing *Noah* had any notion, can never be imagined, unleſs we ſeek for it among the Hopes he conceived of further Deliverance from the Curſe, grounded upon the divine Promiſe that the *Seed of the Woman* ſhould finally prevail; the Right to which Promiſe was conveyed to him before the Flood, *With thee will I eſtabliſh my Covenant*. Gen. vi. 18. For *Noah* had, not only the

temporal Covenant given to him and his Sons, but he was alſo, as the Apoſtle to the *Hebrews* tells us, *Heir of the Righteouſneſs which is by Faith*, ch. xi. 7. If this be the Caſe, then *Noah's* Bleſſing is like unto *Lamech*'s Prophecy; for as *Lamech* foreſaw that *Noah* ſhould receive from God the Covenant of the Earth's Reſtoration; ſo *Noah* foreſaw, that the greater Bleſſing ſtill behind, even the Covenant that ſhould reſtore Man to himſelf and to his Maker, ſhould be convey'd through the Poſterity of *Shem*. This accounts for the Preference given to *Shem*; for *Noah* ſpoke not his own Choice, but declared the Counſel of God, who had now, as he frequenty did afterwards, choſen the Younger before the Elder.

DISCOURSE V.

TO what Purpoſes the antient Prophecies were given, and upon what Foot Religion ſtood from the Beginning to the Reſtoration, or new Eſtabliſhment of the World, in *Noah* and his Poſterity, has been already conſidered. We are now advancing to Times of greater Light, to clearer and more diſtinct Prophecies, and more nearly relating to God's great Diſpenſation of Mercy and Goodneſs towards Mankind, manifeſted by the Revelation of his Son. This Period begins at the Call of *Abraham*, and runs thro'

the Law and the Prophets, ending where the Goſpel of *Chriſt Jeſus* commences. It contains ſuch a Variety and Number of Prophecies, that I cannot propoſe to myſelf ſo large and extenſive a Subject to be the Matter of ſhort Diſcourſes from this Place. But it may perhaps be of ſome Uſe, to inquiſitive Minds, to ſuggeſt to them the great and general Deſign of Providence in the Prophecies of this Period; to ſhew them the State of Religion during this Seaſon; and how well the Light of Prophecy afforded to this Generation correſponded to the State and Neceſſity of the Times. If in this Method of enquiring we can arrive at the Knowledge of God's Deſign, in giving the Word of Prophecy to the old World, we ſhall the more eaſily diſcern of what Uſe theſe antient Oracles are to the preſent World; and how far the Truth of the Goſpel, which we believe and profeſs, depends upon the Authority and Evidence of antient Prophecy. In order to this Enquiry it is neceſſary firſt to conſider the State of true Religion, and the Supports it had during this Period; for

Prophecy being relative to the State of Religion in the World, we muſt know the one, to underſtand the other.

How ſoon the World after the Deluge corrupted their Ways, and loſt the Knowledge of the one true God, *and changed the Glory of the Incorruptible —— into an Image made like to corruptible Man*, we cannot certainly know; but this we certainly know, that in *Abraham*'s Time Idolatry had ſpread far and wide; and taken deep Root even in the Family of *Shem*, and in that Branch of it particularly from which *Abraham* deſcended. This being the Caſe, 'tis highly probable that true Religion had entirely failed in the World, had not God viſibly interpoſed to preſerve ſuch a Senſe of it, as was neceſſary for the Accompliſhment of his great Deſign to reſtore Mankind.

Neceſſary I ſay to this End; for moſt evident it is, That it was not the Intention of Providence in the Call of *Abraham*, or in giving the Law of *Moſes*, to propagate or reſtore true Religion among all Nations of the old World; ſo far from it, that the Covenant with *Abraham* is

founded

founded upon the Condition, not of reforming, but of deſtroying the idolatrous Nations in the Land of *Canaan*; and the Sign of Circumciſion was given to ſeparate *Abraham* and his Poſterity from the reſt of Mankind; which ſhews that the reſt of Mankind were not called to that Covenant, of which Circumciſion was the Sign or Sacrament. Moreover, the Law of *Moſes* was eſtabliſhed in ſuch Rites and Ceremonies, and many of them to be performed only in the Land of *Canaan*, that there is no room to ſuppoſe that it was ever intended to be a general Law for Mankind. Add to this what *Paul* and *Barnabas* tell the People at *Lyſtra*, That *God in Times paſt ſuffered all Nations to walk in their own Ways*. Acts xiv. 16. And what St *Paul* ſays to the People of *Athens*, *God winked at the Times of Ignorance*; *but* now *commandeth* all *Men* every where *to repent*, Acts xvi. 30. And it will be moſt evident, that the Call of *Abraham*, and the Law of *Moſes*, conſequent to it, were not intended as general Calls to Mankind, but were ſubſervient to

ſome

ſome other View and Deſign of Providence.

If we conſider now the whole World loſt to all Senſe of Religion, eſtranged from God, and void of all Hope towards him; and ſuppoſe *one* Family choſen out merely for their *own ſakes* to be delivered from the general Corruption and Miſery, without any View or Deſign towards the general Good of Mankind, it gives ſo mean, ſo partial a View of God, that I think no Religion can conſiſt with ſuch a Notion.

But if the Law of *Moſes* was neither intended to be a general Law for Mankind, nor yet intended as a partial Favour and Benefit to the *Jews* only, excluſive of all Mankind, what remains, but that we muſt conſider it, as a Method of Providence working towards the great End always in View, the general Reſtoration of Mankind from the Curſe of the Fall? As the Opening of that Scene which was to bring a Bleſſing *upon all Nations* of the Earth? Accordingly we find this to be the Caſe; when *Abraham* was called and received the Promiſes, he had Aſſurance

rance given him not only of peculiar Bleſſings to himſelf and Poſterity, but likewiſe of a general Bleſſing to be conveyed thro' him to all Mankind: "*I* "*will make of thee*, ſays God, *a great* "*Nation, and I will bleſs thee, and make* "*thy Name great, and thou ſhalt be a* "*Bleſſing. And I will bleſs them that* "*bleſs thee, and curſe him that curſeth* "*thee:*" Immediately it follows, "*And* "*in thee ſhall all Families of the Earth* "*be bleſſed.* Gen. xii. 2, 3. 'Tis of great Importance in the preſent Queſtion to diſtinguiſh rightly theſe Promiſes.

The Promiſe of temporal Proſperity to *Abraham* and his Poſterity is ſufficiently explained in the Courſe of his Story; as the ſeventh Verſe of this Chapter God tells him he would *give to his Seed the Land of* Canaan: And in Chap. xv. 18. that he would give the *Land unto his Seed*, "*from the River of* Egypt *unto* "*the great River, the River* Euphrates." In the xvii. Chapter, that "*he* "*would multiply him exceedingly, that* "*he ſhould be a Father of many Nations,* "*and Kings ſhould come out of him.*"

Theſe

These were great Promises, and great Inducements to Obedience; but, except the particular Gift of the Land of *Canaan*, (and there were probably other Parts of the World as good as that) there was nothing in them peculiar to *Abraham* and his Posterity only. There were before *Abraham*'s Time, and have been since, many great and powerful Nations of another Kindred; the Sons of *Ham* and *Japhet*, and those descended by other Branches from *Shem*, have arrived to great Prosperity, and left a numerous Issue behind them, in virtue of the common Blessing bestowed on their Ancestors after the Flood, to whom God said, "*Be ye fruitful and multiply and bring* "*forth abundantly in the Earth, and* "*multiply therein*; to them likewise he "gave the Promise of fruiful Seasons; "and sustained them with Corn and with "Wine." Thus far then the Promise to *Abraham* was derived from the temporal Covenant establish'd with *Noah*, and his Sons, after the Flood, in which other Nations and People had a Share as well as himself; and some of them in some

ſome Reſpects, a much greater; as he muſt needs judge, who knows any thing of the ancient or preſent Empires of the *Eaſt* and *Weſt*. But if we look forward, we ſhall ſee the Diſtinction between the ſeveral Promiſes grow plain, when God renews the Covenant, and limits the *peculiar Bleſſing* of *Abraham* to the Son, which ſhould be born of *Sarah* his Wife. In the xvii^th^ of *Geneſis* the Lord appears to *Abraham* and ſays, "*I am the* "*Almighty God, walk before me, and be* "*thou perfect*; then follows, *I will make* "*my Covenant between me and thee, and* "*will multiply thee exceedingly,* — *and* "*thou ſhalt be a Father of many Nati-* "*ons.*" At the 7th and 8th verſes God promiſes to eſtabliſh an *everlaſting* Covenant with him and his Seed *after him*, to give him and them all the *Land of Canaan* for an *everlaſting Poſſeſſion*, and *to be their God*. Here are either two Covenants, mentioned together in the Compaſs of a few Lines, or elſe the ſame Covenant repeated with this Difference, that in the laſt Place it is ſtyled an *everlaſting* Covenant, and the Land of *Canaan*

is assign'd for an *everlasting Possession*; with this remarkable Addition, that God promises to be the *God of Abraham*, and of his Seed after him. And this is the first time that this peculiar Character assumed by God, of being the God of *Abraham*, and of his Seed, occurs in Scripture, and 'tis evidently connected to the Promise of the *everlasting* Covenant. Which Connexion seems to be the true Foundation of our Saviour's Argument, from this Expression, to prove the Resurrection of the Dead; as the Connexion of the Promise of the Land of *Canaan* to the everlasting Covenant seems to be the Reason of treating the Land of *Canaan* as a Type or Sign of Heaven. This Character of God, thus connected to the everlasting Covenant, is likewise a plain Intimation, that two distinct Covenants are mentioned in this Place, and not the same repeated again. Towards the close of this Chapter *Abraham* receives an express Promise that he should have a Son by *Sarah* his Wife, within the Compass of a Year, and that the *everlasting* Covenant should be esta-

blished

bliſhed with *this Son*, and his Seed after him. — *Abraham* had at this Time a Son of thirteen Years old, born of *Hagar* the *Egyptian*; to whom the Angel of the Lord had appeared when ſhe was with Child of this Son, and promiſed to *multiply her Seed exceedingly, that it ſhould not be numbered for multitude.* Gen. xvi. 10. This Promiſe therefore of a numerous Poſterity flouriſhing in the Earth, though Part of the Promiſe given to *Abraham*, as we have ſeen before, is no Part of the everlaſting Covenant, confirmed to *Iſaac*, excluſively to all the natural Sons of *Abraham*. This appears likewiſe from the very Paſſage where this Promiſe is limited to *Iſaac*: *Abraham*, when he received the Promiſe of a Son by his Wife, puts up a Petition, whatever the Occaſion of it was, for his Son *Iſhmael*; "*O that* Iſhmael *might live* "*before thee.*" To which he receives this Anſwer; "*As for* Iſhmael, *I have* "*heard thee: Behold I have bleſſed him,* "*and will make him fruitful, and will* "*multiply him exceedingly: Twelve* "*Princes ſhall he beget, and I will*

"*make*

" *make him a great Nation:*" Immediately it follows, " *But My Covenant* " *will I eſtabliſh with* Iſaac, *whom* Sa- " rah *ſhall bear unto thee:*" Can any thing be plainer to ſhew that the *everlaſting Covenant*, to be eſtabliſh'd with *Iſaac* and his Seed, was of a very different kind, from the Covenant given to *Iſhmael*, of multiplying his Seed, of making him Father of Kings and Princes, and of raiſing him into a great Nation? And yet this very Covenant was given originally to *Abraham*; he was to have a numerous Poſterity, to be Father of Kings, and of a great Nation. *Iſhmael* was admitted to the Benefit of this Covenant, as well as *Iſaac*, and yet expreſsly excluded from that which God emphatically ſtyles MY Covenant, and the *everlaſting* Covenant; an undeniable Evidence that God's Covenant with *Abraham* was founded on better Hopes than thoſe of mere temporal Proſperity. This Diſtinction, of two Covenants in the Caſe of *Iſhmael* and *Iſaac*, made by God himſelf, is the Foundation of St. *Paul*'s Argument to the *Galatians*: " *It is*

" *written*, says he, *that* Abraham *had* " *two Sons*; *the one by a bond Maid, the* " *other by a free Woman: But he who* " *was of the bond Woman was born af-* " *ter the Flesh*; *but he of the free Wo-* " *man was by Promise: Which things* " *are an Allegory*; *for these are the two* " *Covenants:*" And whoever is capable of considering what is related concerning this Matter in the Book of *Genesis*, will evidently see that these are indeed two Covenants; and two such Covenants as fully justify the Apostle's Reasoning upon this Point.

Since then the Promises of temporal Prosperity, made to *Abraham* and his Seed after him, are evidently distinct from the Subject matter of the *everlasting* Covenant, made with him, and limited to *Isaac* and *Jacob*, and afterwards to the Tribe of *Judah*, and lastly to the Family of *David*; it remains to be considered, what the Subject of the Covenant so limited is. If we look back to the Call of *Abraham*, and the Promises which attended it, there we shall find, that after enumerating the

temporal

temporal Bleſſings, which were to deſcend from *Abraham* to his Poſterity, one Bleſſing is added, in which all the World has an Intereſt, and which was to be conveyed to them through *Abraham* and his Seed; "*In thee*, ſays God, "*ſhall all the Families of the Earth be bleſſed.*" Whatever *Abraham* underſtood by this, I think verily he could not underſtand it as his Children at this Day underſtand it, who expect, in virtue of the Promiſes made to the Fathers, to be Lords of the World, and to have Dominion over all People: A ſtrange *Bleſſing* this *to all Nations*, that they ſhould fall from their natural Liberty, and become ſubject to the Dominion of one People! None but a *Jew* can ſee the Happineſs of ſuch a State; the Nations of the Earth, if left to their Choice, would all refuſe this great Bleſſing for themſelves. But before we enquire into the ſpecial Meaning of this Bleſſing upon all Nations, we muſt ſee whether this *univerſal* Bleſſing to be revealed in due time, were truly the Matter of God's *ſpecial*, his *everlaſting* Covenant with

Abraham. We have ſeen already that *Iſhmael* was excluded from this ſpecial Covenant, and *Iſaac* admitted to it; we have the Covenant of God with *Iſhmael*, and the Covenant of God as renewed with *Iſaac*, both preſerved in the Book of *Geneſis*; and 'tis obſervable that the two Covenants, as to worldly Proſperity, are nearly the ſame; but they differ in this, the Covenant with *Iſhmael* ſays nothing of the *Bleſſing to all Nations*, the Covenant with *Iſaac* expreſsly renews this very Promiſe: *In thy Seed ſhall all the Nations of the Earth be bleſſed:* Gen. xxvi. 4. A plain Proof ſurely, that the ſpecial Matter of God's Covenant, limited from *Abraham* to *Iſaac* excluſive of *Iſhmael*, conſiſted in the Promiſe of this *univerſal* Bleſſing, to be conveyed through *Abraham* and *Iſaac* and their Poſterity to all Mankind.

We have the like Evidence from a like Caſe, which happened between the Children of *Iſaac*; with this only difference, that *Iſhmael* and *Iſaac* were born one of a bond Woman, the other of a Free, but *Eſau* and *Jacob* were Twins of one Birth, both

both born of a free Woman: The Bleſſing of *Abraham* was limited to *Jacob*, and deny'd to *Eſau*. Yet *Eſau* received a temporal Bleſſing from his Father, as well as *Jacob*. The Apoſtle to the *Hebrews* accounts it *Profaneneſs* in *Eſau* that he ſold his Birth-right; it muſt be becauſe he ſold the *Bleſſing of Abraham*, and the Promiſes of God; upon any other Account there is no room for this Charge, for it was never reckoned *Prophaneneſs* to ſell mere temporal Rights; nor was *Eſau* excluded from the Benefit of the temporal Promiſes by this ſcandalous Bargain. If *Jacob* was bleſſed with the *Dew of Heaven, and the Fatneſs of the Earth, and Plenty of Corn and Wine*, Gen. xxvii. 28. *Eſau*'s Bleſſing in this reſpect was not inferiour; *Thy Dwelling*, ſays his Father, *ſhall be the Fatneſs of the Earth, and of the Dew of Heaven from above*: ℣. 39. If *Nations were to bow down to* Jacob; ℣. 29. *Eſau* likewiſe was *to live* and prevail by *his Sword*: ℣. 40. If *Jacob*'s *Brethren* were to *bow down to him*, ℣. 29. yet the Time would come when *Eſau ſhould have Dominion*,

and break even *this Yoke from off his Neck*, ℣. 40. Thus the Caſe ſtands between them, if we interpret the whole Bleſſing given to *Jacob*, of temporal Proſperity and Dominion; but there is great Reaſon to limit Part of it to the peculiar Bleſſing of *Abraham* and *Iſaac*; which was undoubtedly conveyed at this Time to *Jacob*. The conveying the Birth-right in the Family of *Abraham* was conveying the ſpecial Bleſſing of *Abraham*, which always attended upon the Birth-right. This Birth-right was evidently made over to *Jacob*, when it was ſaid, *Be Lord over thy Brethren*. The ſpecial Bleſſing was in time to be extended to *all Nations*, as well as to the Houſe of *Abraham*, for *in his Seed all the Families of the Earth were to be bleſſed*; and therefore in Conſequence of the Birth-right it is ſaid to *Jacob*, — *Let People ſerve thee, and Nations bow down to thee*, ℣. 29. It is very evident from the whole Story of *Iſaac*'s Bleſſing his two Sons, that the *chief Bleſſing*, he had to beſtow, fell upon *Jacob*; and 'tis as plain that there are no Words to limit this par-

ticular

ticular Bleſſing to *Jacob*, but theſe now under Conſideration; and *Iſaac* himſelf underſtood that he had paſſed away the Bleſſing of *Abraham* to *Jacob* in theſe Words, and therefore he tells *Eſau* that the Bleſſing was gone beyond Recovery, *I have bleſſed him, yea, and he ſhall be bleſſed*, ℣ 33. But *Eſau* preſſed his Father for a Bleſſing on himſelf: *Iſaac anſwered and ſaid — Behold I have made him thy Lord, and all his Brethren have I given to him for Servants; and with Corn and Wine have I ſuſtained him: And what ſhall I do now unto thee, my Son?* ℣. 37. *Eſau* ſtill urges his Father; *bleſs me, even me alſo, O my Father.* Upon this *Iſaac* bleſſes him; and pray obſerve; of Corn and Wine and temporal Power he gives him a full and an equal Share: — *Thy Dwelling ſhall be the Fatneſs of the Earth, and of the Dew of Heaven from above:* The only Limitation on the Bleſſing is, *Thou ſhalt ſerve thy Brother.* Whatever then was peculiarly given to *Jacob* was contained in the Grant, *of being Lord over his Brethren*; and what this peculiar Gift was,

we may learn from *Iſaac* himſelf, who in the next Chapter renews the Bleſſing on *Jacob*, and gives expreſsly to him and his Seed *The Bleſſing of Abraham*, ℣. 4. In the ſame Chapter the Bleſſing is renewed and confirmed by God himſelf; *In thee and in thy Seed ſhall all the Families of the Earth be bleſſed*, ℣. 14.

That the Regard of *all* Nations, to the Seed in which they were *all to be bleſſed*, ſhou'd be expreſſed by *their bowing down to him*, is no hard Figure of Speech; that even this Yoke, this Superiority of *Abraham*'s Family, ſhou'd one Day be broken, as the Promiſe to *Eſau* ſets forth, when *Jews* and *Gentiles* ſhou'd be on an equal Foot, and equally the People of God, is no more than the original Covenant contains; for the Day was to come, when *all Nations* ſhould be equally *bleſſed*.

If you expound this Bleſſing of temporal Dominion, ſee how the Caſe will ſtand: *Jacob is to rule over* Eſau; yet no ſooner is the Bleſſing given, but he flies his Country for fear of *Eſau*; Gen. xxvii. 43, &c. He lives abroad for many Years,

Years; and when he returns, the Fear and Dread of his Brother returns with him: He *was greatly afraid and diſtreſſed.* Gen. xxxii. 7. His only refuge in this Diſtreſs was to God; *Deliver me, I pray thee, from the Hand of my Brother, from the Hand of* Eſau: ℣. 11. When he ſends a Meſſage to him he ſtyles himſelf, *Thy Servant* Jacob; ℣. 20. When he meets him, *he bowed himſelf to the Ground ſeven times, until he came near to* Eſau; xxxiii. 3. When he ſpeaks to him, he calls him *Lord*; when he was kindly receiv'd by *Eſau*, he ſays, *I have ſeen thy Face, as though I had ſeen the Face of God, and thou wert pleaſed with me:* ℣. 10. What is there in all this to ſhew the Rule and Dominion that was given to *Jacob* over his Mother's Sons?

If you ſuppoſe the Prophecy, underſtood of temporal Dominion, to be fulfilled in the Poſterity of theſe two Brothers, let us ſee how the Caſe ſtands upon this ſuppoſition: The Family of *Eſau* was ſettled in Power and Dominion many Years, before *Jacob*'s Family had any certain Dwelling-place; the Dukes

and

and Kings of *Esau*'s House are reckon'd up, *Gen.* xxxvi. and the Historian tells us, *These are the Kings that reigned in the Land of* Edom, *before there reigned any King over the Children of* Israel, V. 31. When the appointed Time was come for establishing the House of *Israel*, and giving them the Land and Possessions of their Enemies, the Family of *Esau* were, by a particular Decree, exempted from the Dominion of *Israel*. *The Lord spake unto* Moses, —— *Command thou the People, saying, Ye are to pass thro' the Coast of your Brethren the Children of* Esau, *which dwell in* Seir, *and they shall be afraid of you: Take ye good heed unto your selves therefore, meddle not with them; for I will not give you of their Land, no not so much as a Foot-breadth, because I have given* Mount Seir *unto* Esau *for a Possession*, Deut. ii. 4, 5. If in the Time of *David they of* Edom *became his Servants*; 2 Sam. viii. 14. yet in the Days of *Jehoram* did they recover again, and made *a King over themselves*. 2 Kings viii. 20. And, in the Time of *Ahaz* they revenged the Affront, by *smiting*

ting Judah, *and leading away Captives.* 2 Chron. xxviii. 17. Can you now ſuppoſe that this Variety of Fortune between the Children of *Jacob* and *Eſau* was the Thing intended, or meant to be deſcribed, when the Promiſe was given to *Jacob*, that *his Mother's children ſhould bow down to him?* If this were the Caſe, *Iſaac* needed not to be ſo ſcrupulous in preſerving the peculiar Bleſſing to *Jacob*; he might have given *Eſau* a Share of it; and the Event wou'd have anſwered.

It appears, I think, from hence, that the Bleſſing given to *Jacob*, and expreſſed in Words implying a *Rule over his Brethren*, was truly a Conveyance of the Birth-right to him in the Family of *Abraham*; that the Birth-right in *Abraham*'s Family reſpected the ſpecial Bleſſing and Covenant given to *Abraham* by God; That *Iſaac* himſelf calls this Right of Primogeniture in his Houſe, *the Bleſſing* of *Abraham*; that God himſelf, in Confirmation of *Jacob*'s Right of Primogeniture, aſſures him, that *in his Seed all the Families of the Earth ſhall be bleſſed.*

Now

Now this Promiſe being the only ſpecial Promiſe made to *Iſaac* and *Jacob* in Preference to their Brethren, and in Conſequence of God's everlaſting Covenant limited to them, this Promiſe muſt neceſſarily be underſtood to be the ſubject Matter of the everlaſting Covenant: And 'tis very obſervable that this Bleſſing ſo peculiarly belongs to this Covenant, that it is never mentioned with reſpect to *any other Perſon whatever*, than ſuch only, to whom the Right of this Covenant, and the Promiſe of the Land of *Canaan* deſcended. Some interpreters have imagined that theſe Words require no higher a Senſe than this, that all Nations ſhou'd ſee the Proſperity of *Abraham* and his Seed ſo evidently, that they ſhou'd bleſs themſelves and others in ſome ſuch Form as this; *God make thee as great as* Abraham, *and his Seed.* But can we imagine that God's *everlaſting Covenant*, as he himſelf calls it, was given only to produce a proverbial Form of Speech in the World? That the Prerogative of *Iſaac* above *Iſhmael*, of *Jacob* above *Eſau*, lay in this only, that the Nations ſhou'd uſe the

the Name of one in their mutual good Wiſhes, and not of the other? Beſides, when was this ever the Caſe, when did all Nations thus bleſs themſelves, or when was there Occaſion for it? The Poſterity of *Iſhmael* was eſtabliſhed in Power much ſooner, and were as great and ſucceſsful for many Ages, as the *Jews*, and much larger Empires have ſprung from them: So that there was hardly ever any ground to take up this proverbial Speech, which ſome make to be the Whole of this ſpecial Covenant limited from *Abraham*, to *Iſaac* and *Jacob*.

What diſtinct Notion *Abraham* had of the Bleſſing promiſed to all Nations thro' him and his Seed, what he thought of the Manner and Method by which it ſhou'd be effected, we cannot pretend to ſay. But that he underſtood it to be a Promiſe of reſtoring Mankind, and delivering them from the remaining Curſe of the Fall, there can be little doubt. He knew that Death had entred by Sin; he knew that God had promiſed Victory and Redemption to the Seed of the Woman: Upon the Hopes of this Reſtoration the Reli-

Religion of his Anceſtors was founded; and when God, from whom this Bleſſing on *all Men* was *expected*, did *expreſsly promiſe* a Bleſſing on *all Men*, and in this Promiſe founded his *everlaſting Covenant*, what cou'd *Abraham* elſe expect but the Completion in his Seed of that antient Promiſe and Prophecy, concerning the Victory to be obtained by the Woman's Seed? The Curſe of the Ground was expiated by the Flood, and the Earth reſtored with a Bleſſing, which was the Foundation of the temporal Covenant with *Noah*; a large Share of which God expreſsly grants to *Abraham*, and his Poſterity particularly, together with a Promiſe, by their Means, to bring a new and further Bleſſing upon the whole Race of Men. Lay theſe Things together, and ſay what leſs cou'd be expected from the new Promiſe or Prophecy given to *Abraham*, than a Deliverance from that Part of the Curſe ſtill remaining on Man, *Duſt thou art, and to Duſt thou ſhalt return?* In virtue of this Covenant *Abraham* and his Poſterity had reaſon to expect, that the Time wou'd come when

Man

Man ſhou'd *be called from his Duſt again*; for this Expectation they had his Aſſurance who gave the Covenant, That *he would be their God* for ever. Well might our Saviour then tell the Sons of *Abraham*, that *even* Moſes *at the Buſh* ſhew'd the Reſurrection of the Dead, *when he calleth the Lord, the God of* Abraham, *and the God of* Iſaac, *and the God of* Jacob.

To preſerve theſe Hopes in the World, upon which the Reſtoration of the World to Life and Immortality depended, was *Abraham* called from his own Country and Kindred, then tainted with Idolatry, to be a Witneſs to God and his Truth. Had he, with all the reſt of Mankind, been ſuffered to continue in Idolatry, the Knowledge of God had been loſt, and the Remembrance of his Providence in creating Man at firſt, of the Hopes given of a ſecond and better Creation after the Fall, had utterly periſhed. *Abraham* was not called merely for his own Sake, much leſs were his Poſterity, a ſtubborn and ſtiffnecked People, preſerved for their own Sakes; but he was called, and they

preſerved, to be Inſtruments in the Hands of God, for fulfilling the Purpoſes of his Mercy, in the Reſtoration and Redemption of the World. The great Article of the Covenant, limited to *Abraham* and his choſen Seed, moſt evidently regarded the whole Race of Man, and was to grow, in the Fullneſs of Time, into a Bleſſing upon all the Nations of the Earth: He and his Poſterity were Depoſitaries of theſe Hopes, or to uſe the Words of St. *Paul*, this was the *Jews* chief Advantage above others, "*That unto them* "*was committed the Oracles of God*"

This Account will help us to a diſtinct View of the Prophecies, relating to this Period of Time of which we are ſpeaking. As two Covenants were given to *Abraham* and his Seed, one a temporal Covenant, to take place, and to be performed in the Land of *Canaan*; the other a Covenant of better Hopes, and to be performed in a *better Country*; ſo are the Prophecies, given to *Abraham* and to his Children after him, of two kinds; one relative to the temporal Covenant, and given in Diſcharge and Execution of

God's temporal Promiſes; the other relative to the ſpiritual Covenant, given to confirm and eſtabliſh the Hopes of Futurity, and to prepare and make ready the People for the Reception of the Kingdom of God.

Many of the antient Prophecies relate to both Covenants; and hence it comes to paſs, that at the firſt Appearence many of the antient Predictions ſeem to be hardly conſiſtent with themſelves, but to be made up of Ideas, which can never unite in one Perſon, or in one Event. Thus the Promiſes to *David* of a Son, to ſucceed in his Throne, have ſome Circumſtances, which are applicable only to *Solomon*, and the temporal Dominion over the Houſe of *Iſrael*; ſome, which are peculiar to that Son of *David*, who was Heir of an *everlaſting* Kingdom, which was to be eſtabliſh'd in Truth and Righteouſneſs. Hence it is, that we often find the Promiſes of temporal Felicity, and temporal Deliverances, raiſed ſo high, that no temporal Felicity or temporal Deliverance can anſwer the Deſcription; the Thoughts and Expreſſions of the Prophet naturally

moving from the Bleſſings of *one* Covenant, to the Bleſſings of the *other*, and ſometimes deſcribing the inconceivable Glories of one Covenant, by Expreſſions and Similitudes borrowed from the more ſenſible Glories and Bleſſings of the other. The Prophet *Iſaiah*, being ſent to raiſe the drooping Spirits of *Ahaz* and the Houſe of *David*, threatned at that Time with immediate Ruine by two potent Enemies; could not but remember the double Promiſe of a Kingdom, given to *David*, which was a double Security for the Eſtabliſhment of his Houſe; together therefore with the Aſſurances and the Signs given of temporal Dliverance, he intermixes the Aſſurance and the Sign of the greater Deliverance, before the Completion of which the Houſe of *David* could not fail; for that Houſe ſhould continue, till *the Virgin conceived* and *brought forth Immanuel*, that Son of *David*, to whom the *everlaſting Kingdom* was promiſed. Ought it to be matter of Wonder, that the Prophets, who were Miniſters of both Covenants; entruſted with the Counſels of God for the Direction

ction of the temporal Affairs of the People of *Iſrael*, and commiſſioned to cheriſh the Hopes and Expectations of a better Kingdom, to be given in virtue of God's everlaſting Covenant; ought it to be wondered at, I ſay, that they often ſpeak of both Kingdoms together, that they make Uſe of the temporal Deliverances as an Argument to encourage the Hopes of the ſpiritual? When in truth the temporal Deliverances, being the actual Performance of one Covenant, were a great Security for the Performance of the other; and it was unnatural to ſee the Hand of God performing one Promiſe, and not to reflect upon the Certainty of his performing the other.

The Bleſſings belonging to the ſpecial Covenant, given to *Abraham* and his Seed, were reſerved to be revealed in God's appointed Time. The Prophets under the Law cou'd not be commiſſioned to declare theſe Bleſſings openly and nakedly, without anticipating the Time of their Revelation. Hence it is that the Predictions, concerning *Chriſt* and his Kingdom, are clothed in ſuch Figures, as were

proper to raiſe the Hope and Attention of the People, without carrying them beyond the Bounds of Knowledge, preſcribed by God to the Age of the *Jewiſh* Covenant.

If we conſider each kind of Prophecy diſtinctly by itſelf, we ſhall the better diſcern how this Caſe ſtands. To begin then with thoſe relating to the temporal Covenant: *Abraham* was called from his Father's Houſe, upon a Promiſe, that he ſhou'd become a *great Nation*, and that his *Seed ſhou'd poſſeſs the Land of* Canaan. This Promiſe cou'd not be fulfilled in all its parts, till *Abraham*'s Family was multiplied into a Nation. This required many Years; and what muſt become of theſe Children of Promiſe in the mean time? They had no Country of their own; where then ſhou'd they ſettle and multiply? I will not launch out into Speculation upon the Methods of Providence, by which the People of *Iſrael* were raiſed and preſerved; but let any one read the Prophecies from the Call of *Abraham* to *Moſes*, he will evidently ſee that they refer to this State of Things: To

arm the Faith of *Abraham* and his Poſterity, againſt the Fears of Diſappointments, under the neceſſary Delays, and ſome evil Treatments they were to undergo; God acquaints *Abraham* with his Purpoſe, and tells him, his Seed ſhou'd be *four hundred Years in a ſtrange Land.* This Circumſtance, had it not been foretold, wou'd, in all Probability, have blotted out the Memory of the Promiſe; four hundred Years of Diſtreſs are ſufficient to cure any People of their great Expectations. But this Prophecy was a Warning and a Security in this Reſpect. When the Time of Servitude drew near, and the People wanted more than ordinary Help to preſerve their Truſt in the Promiſe of God, *Jacob*, before his End, was enlightned, by the Spirit of Prophecy, to ſet before the twelve Tribes the Glory, and Honours, and Poſſeſſions, that ſhou'd accrue to each in the happy Day of their Triumph: By the ſame Spirit, *Joſeph*, on his Death-bed, aſſures them, That *God would ſurely viſit them, and bring them into the Land which he ſware to* Abraham, *to* Iſaac, *and to* Jacob. Theſe were Cordials

prepared againſt the Day of Diſtreſs, then near at hand.

The Times of *Moſes* and of *Joſhua*, thoſe Days of Miracles as well as Prophecies, want no Explication: The Intention of Providence appears plain in every Step, and may be diſcerned by every Eye.

The Commonwealth of *Iſrael* was raiſed, and flouriſhed under the temporal Covenant, given at firſt to *Noah*; and, in a particular Manner, with additional Promiſes, confirm'd to *Abraham* and his Seed: For this reaſon all the Promiſes and Threatnings of the Law are temporal, ſuitable to the Age and Seaſon of the World. But theſe temporal Bleſſings and Puniſhments were ſo viſibly adminiſtred by the Hand of God, that every Inſtance, of the Execution of the Threats and Promiſes of the Law, became a new Proof of its divine Authority. If you enquire why God did ſo viſibly interpoſe in the Government of this People, always guiding and directing them in the Conduct of temporal Affairs, and Matters of State, by the Voice of his Prophets, when

when all other Nations, before and ſince, have been left under the general Rules of Providence to their own Conduct and Diſcretion; the Anſwer, I think, is this: No other Nation ever had a divine Law, given upon the Eſtabliſhment of temporal Bleſſings and Puniſhments; and therefore God had not ſo bound himſelf to any other Nation, to account to them for their temporal Proſperity and Adverſity: But to the *Jews*, with whom he had eſtabliſhed a Law and a Covenant upon *temporal Promiſes*, he ſtood obliged to make good his Word, and to juſtify himſelf to them in the Adminiſtration of *temporal Affairs*. For this reaſon a Succeſſion of Prophets was raiſed up among them, at whoſe Mouths they might receive the Direction of God: And this is what *Moſes* means when he ſays, "*What Nation* "*is there ſo great? Who hath God ſo* "*nigh unto them, as the Lord our God* "*is in all things that we call upon him* "*for?*" Deut. iv. 7.

When ever it was neceſſary to puniſh the People for their Diſobedience; that they might not be tempted by the Pro-

ſperity of other Nations, and their own Adverſity, to fall away to other Gods; they were forewarned of the Things that were to befall them, their Calamities were prophetically deſcribed to them, that they might know whenever they ſuffered, that it was the very Hand of God, of *their own God*, that was upon them: And this is the Reaſon of our finding ſo many Prophecies, under the Law, relating to the civil State and Condition of the *Jews*; for this Cauſe the great Captivity of *Babylon* is ſo largely and fully foretold by the Prophets, that the People might not be tempted to think that the Gods of the Nations had prevailed againſt them, and thereby be ſeduced, as often times they were ſeduced by this very Imagination, to forſake God in their Diſtreſs; but that they might know that the Almighty Hand of the Lord was in all their Sufferings, and might thereby become humble and obedient. And further, that they might know that all their Adverſity and Proſperity came on them, according to the expreſs Terms of their Covenant with God, who bleſſed them when obedient,

dient, humbled them when obſtinate. All Nations have had, and ſtill have their Turns of Proſperity and Adverſity, and God thinks not himſelf obliged to account to them for the Meaſures of his Providence towards them: But the Caſe was otherwiſe with the *Jewiſh* Nation, for God having eſtabliſhed a Covenant with them, upon temporal Promiſes and temporal Curſes; the very Execution of the Covenant, on God's Part, required him to appear and openly adminiſter the Penalties and Promiſes of his Law; to procure the Happineſs of the People when obedient, and to inflict the Puniſhment due to their Iniquity: Hence it is that he directs them in the Way of temporal Happineſs by the Voice of his Prophets; and gives them open Warning of all Evils which he brings on them: That they might ſee him in every Inſtance performing the Word of his Covenant. Every Prophecy from God ſpoke in the Language of *Moſes*'s Song, *See now, that I, even I am he, and there is no God with me: I kill, and make alive; I wound and*

I heal;

I heal; neither is there any that can deliver out of my Hand.

This accounts for all the Prophecies of the old Teſtament relating to the temporal State of the *Jewiſh* Nation; with which we have no further Concern, than only to give a reaſonable Account of them; that the ancient Prophets of God may not paſs for mere *Fortune-tellers*, as they have been repreſented to the World of late.

The People of the *Jews* were ſo prone to follow the Cuſtoms of the Nations around them, and to fall away to Idolatry, that from their coming into *Canaan*, till the Times of the *Babyloniſh* Captivity, there was a perpetual Struggle between the Prophets of God, and the falſe Prophets of the Nations, which ſhould prevail; with this View are many ancient Prophecies given, to preſerve the People from being ſeduced by the Nations round them. We may learn this from the Reproof given to the Meſſengers of *Ahaziah*, who had ſent to enquire of *Baalzebub*, the God of *Ekron*, whether he ſhould recover of his Diſeaſe: "*Go*, ſays

" the Angel of the Lord to *Elijah*, *Go* " *meet the Meſſengers of the King of* " Samaria, *and ſay unto them; Is it not* " *becauſe there is not a God in* Iſrael, " *that ye go to enquire of* Baal-zebub " *the God of* Ekron? *Now therefore* " *thus ſaith the Lord, thou ſhalt not* " *come down from that Bed on which* " *thou art gone up, but ſhalt ſurely die:*" 2 Kings i. 3, 4. To the very ſame Purpoſe God ſpeaks in the Prophet *Iſaiah*, rendering an Account of his ancient Prophecies — " *I have declared the former* " *things from the Beginning, and they* " *went forth out of my Mouth, and I* " *ſhewed them, I did them ſuddenly, and* " *they came to paſs. Becauſe I knew that* " *thou art obſtinate, and thy Neck is an* " *Iron Sinew, and thy Brow Braſs. I* " *have even from the Beginning declared* " *it to thee; before it came to paſs I ſhew-* " *ed it thee; leſt thou ſhouldſt ſay, Mine* " *Idol hath done them, and my graven* " *Image, and my molten Image hath com-* " *manded them.*" Iſaiah xlviii. 3, 4, 5.

You ſee now upon what Foot all the Prophecies in the old Teſtament ſtand, which

which relate to the temporal Concerns of the *Jewiſh* Nation; you ſee likewiſe the Reaſon why this kind of Prophecy has ceaſed in the *Chriſtian* Church. The Goſpel is not founded in temporal Promiſes; ſo far from it, that we are called upon to take up our Croſs, and follow *Chriſt*. The bringing in of better Hopes has vacated the Promiſes of the *Moſaick* Covenant; and 'tis expected of us, after ſo much Light given, that our Faith ſhould be Proof againſt the Adverſities of the World, without the Help of a Prophet to foretell, or to reveal to us, in every Inſtance, the Counſel of God.

Theſe Prophecies relating to the Things of this Life, concern us but little; they have had their Completion, long ſince, in Events which affect not us: But others there are; relating to the great *Depoſitum*, entruſted with the *Jews*, even the Hopes of Redemption; which were to be a Bleſſing to all the Nations of the Earth, in which we are highly concerned, and which will deſerve our particular Conſideration.

DISCOURSE

DISCOURSE VI.

THE Prophecies of the old Teſtament, generally conſidered, relate either to the temporal State and Condition of the *Jews*, and were, in order to the Adminiſtration and Execution, on God's Part, of the temporal Covenant, given to *Abraham* and his natural Deſcendents; or they relate to that great and univerſal Bleſſing, promiſed to *Abraham* and to his Seed, tho' not limited to them, but expreſsly deſigned and extended, in the Words of the original Covenant, *to all the Nations of the World*. Of theſe, we have already conſidered the

firſt

firſt Kind, and endeavoured to ſhew the Purport and Deſign of Providence, in the many Oracles reducible to this Head. It remains now, that we conſider the Prophecies of the ſecond Kind in the ſame Method, not enquiring into the expreſs Meaning and Accompliſhment of every ſingle Prophecy, applicable to this Subject; but into the general Uſe and Deſign of theſe Prophecies, which being diſcovered we ſhall be able, with better Succeſs, to apply ourſelves to the Examination of each divine Oracle. The Prophecies of the ſeveral Periods, already conſidered, have been found to correſpond to the State of Religion in the World, at the Time of giving the Prophecy: A great Preſumption that the Caſe is the ſame under the *Jewiſh* Diſpenſation. We muſt therefore in order to our preſent Enquiry, conſider the State of Religion under the *Moſaick* Diſpenſation, and examine how far, and to what Purpoſes Prophecy was requiſite, and whether in fact theſe Purpoſes were ſerved by the Prophecies under the Law.

As

As to the State of Religion under the Law of *Moſes*, to ſave your Time and my own, I ſhall refer my ſelf to the Books of the Law, in every Man's Hand. But two Queſtions there are, neceſſary to be conſidered at preſent; and firſt, The Promiſe to *Abraham* conſiſting of two diſtinct Parts, or including two diſtinct Covenants; the one, relating to the temporal State and Proſperity of his Seed in the Land of *Canaan*; the other, to the Bleſſing, which thro' him and his Seed, was to be conveyed to *all Nations* of the Earth; the Queſtion is, to which of theſe two Covenants the Law of *Moſes* is annexed. If the Law was given in Execution of the *Promiſe*, made to *all Nations*, then have the Nations nothing further to expect; God has fulfilled his Word: The *Jews* are right in adhering to their Law; and we in the wrong in rejecting it: But if the Law of *Moſes* is built upon the temporal Covenant only, and given properly to the *Jews* only; then both *Jews* and *Gentiles* have further Hopes, and a juſt Expectation remaining, to ſee God's Promiſe to *all Nations* accompliſh'd;

pliſh'd; which was not accompliſhed by the giving of the Law.

I have already, in the Courſe of this Argument, obſerved to you, that the Law of *Moſes* was given to the *Jews* only, and not to all Nations: For which theſe Reaſons, among others, may be aſſigned:

Firſt, The Obligation of no Law extends beyond the Terms of its Promulgation; now the Law of *Moſes* was promulged to the *Jews* only; the Words are, *Hear O Iſrael*; whereas, had the Law been intended for all Nations, it ought to have been promulged to all, and the Words ſhould have been, Hear *all Nations of the Earth:* And thus the *Chriſtian* Law is promulged; the Apoſtles had it expreſsly in Commiſſion from *Chriſt* "*To* "*teach ALL NATIONS, baptizing* "*them in the Name of the Father, and* "*of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt,* "*teaching them to obſerve all things* "*whatſoever I have commanded you:* "*and lo, I am with you ALWAY,* "*even unto the END OF THE* "*WORLD:*" A Commiſſion, which plainly ſhews that the Goſpel Diſpenſation

tion extends to all Places, and all Times, even to the End of the World; and that no other new Law is to be expected.

Secondly, The Law of *Moſes* relates to the temporal Covenant only, as being eſtabliſh'd expreſsly upon the Terms and Conditions of it. The ten Commandments are founded upon this, that God brought them, the *Jews*, *out of the Land of Egypt, out of the Houſe of Bondage:* A Reaſon which extended to the People of the *Jews* only; for all other Nations were not brought out of the Land of *Egypt*, and the Houſe of Bondage. The firſt Threatning is temporal, of viſiting the Iniquity of the Fathers upon the Children, unto the third and fourth Generation; the Promiſe is of the ſame kind; both relative to the temporal Covenant: as is likewiſe the Promiſe of the fifth Commandment, *That thy Days may be long in the Land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.*

Thirdly, Many Rites and Performances of the Law were confined to the Land of *Canaan*, and the Temple of *Jeruſalem:* for which Reaſon even the *Jews*, in their

Diſperſion, pretend not to obſerve the Law in theſe Points, and they wou'd be Tranſgreſſors of the Law, if they did. Now 'tis abſurd, if the Law was intended for all People, that the main Performances of it ſhould be confined within the Territories of one particular People only: And therefore, when the *Chriſtian* Law was to take place, every Country was to be a proper Place of divine Worſhip: Which is the true Meaning of our Saviour's Words to the Woman of *Samaria*; *Woman believe me, the Hour cometh, when ye ſhall neither in this Mountain, nor yet at* Jeruſalem *worſhip the Father*, John iv. 21.

Now this being the Caſe, 'tis evident that the Promiſe of a Bleſſing to all Nations ſubſiſted in its full Force and Vigour, during the Continuance of the Law of *Moſes*; for as that Promiſe was not compleated by the giving of the Law, in which all Nations were not concern'd; ſo neither could ſo general a Promiſe be annull'd, or ſet aſide, by a private Law, given to one People only. And this is the true Senſe and Meaning of St. *Paul's*

Argument

Argument *Gal.* iii. "*This I ſay, that the* "*Covenant that was confirmed before* "*of God in* Chriſt, *the Law which was* "*four hundred and thirty Years after* "*cannot diſannul, that it ſhould make* "*the Promiſe of none Effect.*"

Secondly, Another Queſtion proper to be conſider'd with reſpect to the State of Religion under the *Jewiſh* Diſpenſation, is this: How far the Religion of the *Jews* was preparatory to that new Diſpenſation, which was in due Time to be revealed, in Accompliſhment of the Promiſe, made to all Nations. Now if *Abraham* and his Poſterity were choſen, not merely for their own ſakes, or out of any partial Views and Regards towards them, but, to be Inſtruments in the Hand of God for bringing about his great Deſigns in the World; if the temporal Covenant was given for the ſake of the everlaſting Covenant, and to be ſubſervient to the Introduction of it; 'tis highly probable that all Parts of the *Jewiſh* Diſpenſation were adapted to ſerve the ſame End, and that the Law founded on the temporal Covenant was intended, as the temporal

Covenant it ſelf was, to prepare the Way to better Promiſes. If this, upon the whole, appears to be a reaſonable Suppoſition, then have we a Foundation to enquire into the Meaning of the Law, not merely as it is a literal Command to the *Jews*, but as containing the Figure and Image of good Things to come. It can hardly be ſuppoſed, that God intending finally to ſave the World by *Chriſt* and the Preaching of the Goſpel, ſhould give an intermediate Law, which had no reſpect nor Relation to the Covenant, which he intended to eſtabliſh for ever. And whoever will be at the Pains to conſider ſeriouſly the whole Adminiſtration of Providence together, from the Beginning to the End, may ſee perhaps more Reaſon than he imagines, to allow of Types and Figures in the *Jewiſh* Law.

To proceed then: The *Jewiſh* Diſpenſation not conveying to *all Nations* the Bleſſing promiſed through *Abraham's* Seed, but being only the Adminiſtration of the Hopes and Expectations, created by the Promiſe of God; in this reſpect it ſtood entirely upon the Word of Pro-

phecy; for future Hopes and Expectations from God can have no other real Foundation. In as much then as the *Jewish* Religion did virtually contain the Hopes of the Goſpel, the Religion it ſelf was a Prophecy; and as the *Jewiſh* Church was founded to preſerve, and to adminiſter theſe Hopes, the prophetical Office was in ſome Meaſure neceſſary and eſſential to this Church, to nouriſh and ſupport their Hopes and Expectations from God.

In what manner the *Bleſſing of all Men* was eſtabliſhed with *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, we have already ſeen. The next Limitation of it is to the Tribe of *Judah*, in that famous Prophecy delivered by *Jacob*, juſt before his Death, *The Sceptre ſhall not depart from* Judah, *nor a Lawgiver from between his Feet until* Shiloh *come, and unto him ſhall the gathering of the People be*, Gen. xlix. 10. There are ſo many Interpretations of this Prophecy, ſome peculiar to the *Jews*, and ſome to Chriſtians; and ſo many Difficulties to be accounted for, whatever Way we take, that I ſhall not pretend to en-

ter into the Deciſion of them at preſent. But take the whole Prophecy, relating to the Tribe of *Judah*, together, and there will be enough to anſwer our immediate Purpoſe, without entring into theſe Obſcurities. *Judah*, ſays *Jacob*, *Thou art he whom thy Brethren ſhall praiſe; thy Hand ſhall be in the Neck of thine Enemies: Thy Fathers Children ſhall bow down before thee.* In a Form of Words, not unlike this, the peculiar Bleſſing was appropriated to *Shem*; Japhet *ſhall dwell in the Tents of* Shem, *and* Canaan *ſhall be his Servant*, Gen. ix. 26. And when *Jacob* himſelf had the *Bleſſing of* Abraham ſettled on him, by his Father *Iſaac*, in preference to his Brother *Eſau*, the very Words in which the Grant was made to him, are theſe: *Let People ſerve thee, and Nations bow down to thee; be thou Lord over thy Brethren, and let thy Mothers Sons bow down to thee*, Gen. xxvii. 29. Now when *Jacob* uſes partly theſe very Words, partly others of like Import, can he be underſtood to beſtow any other Bleſſing on his Son *Judah*, than that very Bleſſing, which he, in this ſame Form of

Words, received from his Father? Cou'd he forget the Import of his own Bleſſing when he was preferred to *Eſau*? Or cou'd he uſe this ſolemn Form of Words, and mean ſomething quite different from the Senſe they carried, when his antient Father pronounced them over him? The other Parts of this Prophecy relate, I think, to the temporal Proſperity of *Judah*, and promiſe a Continuance of that Tribe till the *Bleſſing of* Abraham ſhou'd come, and be extended to *all Nations*: but I will not enter into this large Field of Controverſy.

The next and the laſt Limitation of this ſpecial Promiſe is to the Family of *David*; a Point ſo unconteſted, that there is no room to call it in queſtion, without rejecting the Authority of all the Prophets; and ſo plain withal, that it needs no proving. Here the Promiſe reſted until it fell upon *him*, for whom it was reſerved, and to whom it was ever due; upon him, to whom the *Birthright* appertained, who was the *Firſtborn* of every Creature; and concerning whom the Almighty had declared long before, *I will*

make him my Firſtborn, higher than the Kings of the Earth. Here it is fixed, and here it muſt reſt, till *all Things are accompliſhed; for he muſt reign till he hath put all Enemies under his Feet*; till *Death* itſelf is *ſwallowed up* in *Victory.*

It is much to be obſerved, that the Prophecies relating to the Covenant of better Hopes, were given to the People of God, when Religion itſelf ſeem'd to be in Diſtreſs, and to want all Helps to ſupport it in the World. When *Abraham* was called to forſake the Country and the Religion of his Fathers, then had he the Promiſe of the bleſſed Seed. *Iſaac* and *Jacob* being ſurrounded on all ſides with Idolatry, in the midſt of a very corrupt and degenerate World, were ſuſtained by the ſame Hopes: When the People of *Iſrael* were in *Egypt*, and under many Temptations of following the Gods of the Country, then was the Promiſe ſettled on *Judah*, and the remarkable Prophecy given of *Shiloh*'s coming. As ſoon as God appeared manifeſtly, and oftentimes miraculouſly, making good the Promiſes of the temporal Covenant to the Children of

Abraham,

Abraham, and the People wanted no other Evidence to keep them ſtedfaſt in their Obedience, or to ſecure them from falling away to the Gods of the Nations round them, we meet with few Inſtances of this ſort of Prophecy. Whilſt God himſelf was Governour and King of the People, and directed all their Affairs by the Voice of his Prophets, their Adverſity and their Proſperity, which were always in proportion to their Obedience and Diſobedience, were a ſufficient Inſtruction to them to cleave to God ſtedfaſtly. This was the Caſe from *Moſes* to *David*, who had the Promiſe of the everlaſting Covenant eſtabliſhed with him and with his Seed, in Reward of his Conſtancy and Faith towards God under all the Difficulties, thro' which he made his way to the Crown, appointed to him by God. But when the ſucceeding Kings fell into Idolatry, and the People, prone to Evil, followed their Example, ſo that God determin'd to remove them out of his Sight, and ſcatter them among the idolatrous Nations, whoſe Gods they had choſen before the Lord their Saviour: then, for

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the Sake of the few Righteous, were the better Hopes revived, that *the Juſt might live by Faith*, and that a *Remnant might be ſaved*. The Prophet *Iſaiah*, who ſpeaks ſo plainly of the Kingdom of *Chriſt*, entered upon his Office not long before the ten Tribes were carried into Captivity, as a Puniſhment for their Idolatry: The Prophet *Jeremy* ſaw the other Tribes carried away to *Babylon*: And *Daniel* was himſelf one of the Children of the Captivity. This was a Time in which true Faith wanted the Comfort of future Hopes; the preſent Scene was dark and gloomy, the loving Kindneſs of the Lord was hid from his People, and they ſaw nothing but Tokens of Anger and Diſpleaſure on every ſide: In this Time therefore God thought fit to give more and plainer Intimations of his Purpoſe, to eſtabliſh the Kingdom of Righteouſneſs, than ever had been given before, from the Days of *Adam*: Now was it that the *Seed in whom all Nations were to be bleſſed* was manifeſtly deſcribed; that the Time and Place of his Birth were appointed; his great Works, his Glories, and

and his Sufferings, were foretold. Now was it, that God taught his People plainly to expect a new Covenant, a better than that made with their Fathers: In a Word, now was it that all Eyes were opened to look for his coming, who was to be the *Glory of* Iſrael; the *Deſire of all Nations*; *a Light to lighten the* Gentiles. This great Scene being opened, and placed in ſo clear a View, the Work of Prophecy was finiſhed, and in a few Years, the Gift itſelf ceaſed: A plain Evidence that the *Spirit* of *Prophecy* is the *Teſtimony* of *Jeſus*; and that all the Bleſſings and Promiſes, given to God's antient People, were to have their final Accompliſhment in the Manifeſtation of the *bleſſed Seed*.

The ten Tribes, which were carried away by the King of *Aſſyria*, never more returned to their own Country; the Tribe of *Judah*, after ſeventy Years Captivity, came back to the Land of *Canaan*, erected a new Temple, and continued to be a Tribe and a People till the laſt Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* by the *Romans*. If you think all this happened by Chance, there is no room to ask you any Queſtions about

about it: But if you allow the Hand of God to be in these Events, tell me from whence this Distinction, this partial Regard to the Tribe of *Judah?* Read their own Prophets, and learn from thence the Character of their Tribe, you'll find no Merit in them to justify this Regard of God towards them: They were as bad as their Neighbours; but they had one Advantage, they had a Promise which none of the ten Tribes had, *That the Sceptre should not depart from* Judah —— *till* Shiloh *came:* for the fulfilling of this Promise, and all the Promises relating to the *blessed Seed*, was *this Tribe* preserved some hundreds of Years, after the others had ceased to be a People.

That this Tribe was resettled purely for the Accomplishment of God's Promises of a better Covenant, appears from all the Circumstances of their Condition after their Return: They were not restored to enjoy the antient Privileges of the People of God in the Land of *Canaan:* Those Privileges were forfeited by their Iniquity; Their *Urim* and their *Thummim* were no more heard of; and after

after they were once eſtabliſhed in the Land (a Point in which Providence was nearly concerned) the Gift of Prophecy ceaſed, and God appeared not in the Management of their temporal Affairs, as formerly he had done: They were often diſtreſſed, and often brought near Ruine; they ſuffered in all the Changes of the Empire of the Eaſt, and were, as they expreſs themſelves, *Servants in the Land which God gave to their Fathers*, Neh. ix. 36. I mention this particular, to account to you the more clearly for the ceaſing of Prophecy ſome Ages before the coming of *Chriſt*. Prophecy among the *Jews* was relative to the two Covenants given to *Abraham*; when the *Jews* had forfeited the Bleſſings of the temporal Covenant, and God had fully opened and prepared the Way for the Coming in of the Second, he recalled his Miniſters and Ambaſſadors, for whoſe Service he had no longer any Occaſion.

That the Prophecies, relating to the ſecond and better Covenant, produced a ſuitable Effect, and were matter of Comfort and Conſolation to the Righteous a-

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mong the *Iſraelites*, may be collected from ſome few Alluſions to the Opinions of their own Times, to be found in the Books of the Prophets. That the People of *Iſrael* had, in the Days of the Prophet *Amos*, a Notion of ſome great Deliverance, or Bleſſing, ſtill to come, may be gathered from the Reproof given to thoſe, who, though void of the Fear of God, yet expected a Share in his Bleſſing. *Wo unto you that deſire the Day of the Lord: To what End is it for you? the Day of the Lord is Darkneſs and not Light.* Amos v. 18. As ſome waited in Faith for the Conſolation of *Iſrael*, ſo others there were who mocked at all ſuch Hopes and Expectations; to theſe the Prophet *Iſaiah* ſpeaks; *Wo unto them, that draw Iniquity with Cords of Vanity, and Sin as it were with a Cart-rope: That ſay, Let him make Speed and haſten his Work, that we may ſee it: And let the Counſel of the holy One of* Iſrael *draw nigh and come, that we may know it*, v. 18, 19. Under the Power of theſe irreligious Mockers the Righteous (and ſuch has ever been their Lot) were wearied

and

and oppreſſed, but the Prophet ſpeaks comfort to them; *Hear the Words of the Lord, ye that tremble at his Word; your Brethren that hated you, and caſt you out for my Name ſake, ſaid, Let the Lord be glorified: But he ſhall appear to your Joy, and they ſhall be aſhamed.* lxvi. 5. As wicked as the People of *Iſrael* were, yet in all Times were there ſome who waited for the Salvation of God; whoſe Faith and Hope are well expreſſed by the Son of *Sirach*; *The Power of the Earth is in the Hand of the Lord, and in due Time he will ſet over it one that is profitable*, Ecclus. x. 4.

That the Prophecy, given at the Time of the Fall, was underſtood, in the antient *Jewiſh* Church, to relate to the Times of the *Meſſias*, may with great Probability be inferred from many Paſſages, but eſpecially from one in *Iſaiah*, where after a full Deſcription of the Kingdom of *Chriſt*, and the Happineſs of thoſe who were the *Seed of the Bleſſed of the Lord*, the State and Condition of the Wicked, in the time of that Kingdom, is thus deſcribed in few Words; *And Duſt ſhall*

be

be the Serpent's Meat, Isa. lxv. 25. By what Figure of Speech, or for what Reason is the Serpent here made to signify those, who are distinguished from the *Seed of the Blessed*? And how comes the Punishment of these Reprobates to be set forth by the *Serpent's eating Dust*? Here is nothing in the Prophet to explain this Figure; but he seems to use it as a Saying well known, and perfectly understood by his Countrymen; and from whence could they borrow it, but from the History of Man's Fall? There you may find the *Seed of the Blessed*, to whom Victory over the Serpent is promised; and there may you see the *Serpent* doomed *to eat Dust*; and the Allusion to this antient Prophecy, in *Isaiah*'s Description of the Kingdom of the *Messias*, shews in what Sense it was understood of old, and for many Ages before the Birth of *Christ*.

These Prophecies, relating to the Kingdom of the *Messias*, have still a larger and more extensive Use, not confined to any particular Age, but reaching to every Age of the *Christian* Church: They were given to the *Jews of old* for the Support

of

of their Faith, and are a ſtanding Reproof to their Children *of this Age* for their Unbelief: They taught thoſe of *old Time* to expect the Kingdom of *Chriſt*, and are a Condemnation to thoſe *of this Time* for rejecting it: They are a Support and an Evidence to the Goſpel, and furniſh every true Believer with an Anſwer to *give to him, who aſketh the Reaſon of the Hope that is in him.*

They who are educated in the Belief of *Chriſtianity*, and taught to receive the Books of both Teſtaments with equal Reverence, are not apt to diſtinguiſh between the Evidence for their Faith, ariſing from the one, and the other. But if we look back to the earlieſt Times of Preaching the Goſpel, and conſider how the Caſe ſtood as to the *Jewiſh* Converts on one Side, who were convinced of the divine Authority of the old Teſtament; and as to the *Gentile* Converts on the other, who had no ſuch Perſuaſion; the Diſtinction will appear very manifeſtly. The antient Prophecies, though they are Evidence both to the *Jew* and to the *Gentile*, yet are they not ſo to

both in the ſame Way of Reaſoning and Deduction, nor to the ſame End and Purpoſe. For conſider; the *Jew* was poſſeſſed of the Oracles of God, and firmly perſuaded of the Truth of them; the very firſt thing therefore which he had to do upon the Appearence of the *Meſſiah*, was to examine his Title, by the Characters given of him in the Prophets; he could not, conſiſtently with his Belief in God, and Faith in the antient Prophecies, attend to other Arguments, 'till fully ſatisfied and convinced in this: All the Prophecies of the old Teſtament, relating to the Office and Character of the *Meſſiah*, were immoveable Bars to all Pretenſions, 'till fulfilled and accompliſhed in the Perſon pretending to be the promiſed, and long expected Redeemer. For this Reaſon the Preachers of the Goſpel, in applying to the *Jews*, begin with the Argument from Prophecy. Thus St. *Paul*, in his Diſcourſe with the *Jews* at *Antioch* in *Piſidia*, begins with the Call of *Abraham*, and after a ſhort hiſtorical Deduction of Matters from thence to the Times of *David*, he adds, *Of this Man's Seed*

hath

hath God according to his Promiſe raiſed unto Iſrael *a Saviour* Jeſus, *Acts* xiii. 23. Where you ſee plainly that the whole Argument reſts upon the Authority of Prophecy; and all the Parts of this Apoſtolical Sermon are anſwerable to this Beginning, proceeding from one End to the other upon the Authority of the old Prophets: But the very ſame Apoſtle St. *Paul*, preaching to the People of *Athens* *Acts* xvii. argues from other Topicks; he ſays nothing of the Prophets, to whoſe Miſſion and Authority the *Athenians* were perfect Strangers, but begins with declaring to them, *God that made the World and all Things therein*; He goes on condemning all idolatrous Practices, and aſſuring them that "*God is not wor-*"*ſhipped with Men's Hands, as though* "*he needed any thing.*" He accounts to them for the paſt Times of Ignorance at which God winked, and tells them, that *now* he calls all Men to Repentance, having appointed *Chriſt Jeſus to be the Judge of all Men*; for the Truth of which he appeals to the Evidence of *Chriſt*'s Reſurrection, —— "*Whereof*

" ſays the Apoſtle, *he hath given Aſ-*
" *ſurance unto all Men, in that he hath*
" *raiſed him from the Dead,*" *v.* 31.
Whence comes this Difference? How comes St. *Paul*'s Argument, upon one and the ſame Subject, in *Acts* xiii. and xvii. to be ſo unlike to each other? Can this be accounted for any other Way, than by conſidering the different Circumſtances of the Perſons to whom he delivered himſelf. In *Acts* xiii. he argues profeſſedly with *Jews*, to whom were committed the Oracles of God, and who, from theſe Oracles, were well inſtructed in the great Marks and Characters of the expected *Meſſiah*. It had been highly abſurd therefore to reaſon with them upon other Arguments, 'till he had firſt convinced them by their Prophets; — and having ſo convinced them, it would have been impertinent. To them therefore he urges and applies the Authority of Prophecy only: But to the *Athenians*; who knew not the Prophets, or if they knew them, yet had no Reverence or Eſteem for them; it had been quite ridiculous to offer Proofs from Prophecies:

cies: The Appeal therefore, before them, is made to the ſound and clear Principles of natural Religion; and to the Miracles of the Goſpel, the Fame of which probably had, long before, reached to *Athens*; and the Truth of which, they being mere Matters of Fact, was capable of undeniable Evidence and Demonſtration.

'Tis very obſervable that St. *Paul*, in his Sermon at *Athens*, goes no further, than calling them to Repentance, and to Faith in *Chriſt*, as the Perſon appointed by God to judge the World: In which Doctrine he had natural Religion with him in every Point, excepting the Appointment of *Chriſt* to be Judge, for which he appeals to the Evidence, given by God in raiſing *Jeſus* from the Dead. But to the *Jews* he ſpeaks of a Saviour, of Remiſſion of Sins, of Juſtification of all Believers from all Things, from which the Law of *Moſes* could not juſtify. Whence comes this Difference, unleſs from hence, That the *Jews* were from their Scriptures well acquainted with the loſt Condition of Man, and knew that a Redemption

from Sin, and the Powers of it, was to be expected? But the *Gentiles* had loſt this Knowledge; and were firſt to be taught the Condition of the World, and the various Adminiſtrations of Providence with Regard to Mankind, before they could have any juſt Notion of the Redemption of the World.

With reſpect to the *Gentiles* then, the Caſe ſtood thus: They were called from Idols to the Acknowledgment of the true God; from Iniquity to the Practice of Virtue; by ſetting before them *Chriſt Jeſus*, the Preacher of Righteouſneſs, and the appointed Judge of the World, under the Confirmation of many Signs and Wonders, wrought by God for this Purpoſe. Being ſo far eſtabliſhed, they were led back to view this wonderful Scene of Providence, as it ſtood in the antient Prophecies; and with them the Authority of the Prophecies ſtood mainly upon the exact Completion, which was before their Eyes; From the Authority of Prophecy ſo eſtabliſhed, they underſtood the paſt Workings of Providence, and the State of the World; and

came

came to ſee that *Chriſt* was not only the Judge, but the Redeemer of Mankind: To the *Jew* Prophecy was the firſt Proof, to the *Gentile* it was the laſt: The *Jew* believed in *Chriſt*, becauſe foretold by the Prophets; the *Gentiles* believed the Prophets, becauſe they had ſo exactly foretold *Chriſt Jeſus*. Both became firm Believers; having, each in his Way, a full View of all the Diſpenſations of Providence towards Mankind.

If this Account be true, as it appears to me to be, it will enable us to clear this Argument from Prophecy of the many Miſrepreſentations, under which it has been induſtriouſly clouded: It will ſhew us, that there is no Occaſion for a *Gentile* to become a *Jew*, in order to his becoming a *Chriſtian*, upon the Authority of the antient Prophets: It will ſhew us, that the Proof from Prophecy is not *argumentum ad hominem*, in the *Jews* Caſe, nor in the *Gentiles*; nor yet an Argument of the ſame kind in both Caſes, though, in both Caſes proceeding upon real and ſolid Principles of Reaſon. But I muſt leave theſe Applications to you, and

proceed to obſerve another Uſe of Prophecy, with regard to the *Jews*, and for which the *Gentile* World ſeems not to have had the ſame Occaſion.

The *Jews* lived under a divine Law, eſtabliſhed in Signs and Wonders, and mighty Works, founded in very great Promiſes on one ſide, in Threatnings of mighty Terror on the other; as far as the Bleſſings and Terrors of this World can extend: They are warned over and over not to forſake their Law, or to ſuffer any ſtrange Cuſtoms and Ceremonies to grow up among them. Theſe Cautions, intended to preſerve them from the Corruptions of the Heathen Nations around them, might eaſily, as in the Event they have done, grow into Prejudices, againſt any future Revelation, tho' made upon the Authority of God himſelf. To guard againſt ſuch Prejudices, and to render them without Excuſe, it was but reaſonable to give them early and frequent Notice of the Change intended, that they might not, under the Colour of adhering ſteſtfaſtly and faithfully to God's firſt Covenant, reject his Second, when the Time

Time of Publication came. There are of this ſort many Prophecies in the old Teſtament; of this kind are the many Declarations on God's Part, that he had no Pleaſure in Sacrifices and Oblations, in new Moons and in Sabbaths; ſtrang Declarations, conſidering that all theſe were his own Appointments! But not ſtrange, conſidering the many and frequent Prophecies of a new and a better Covenant, to be eſtabliſhed with his People. The Prophet *Iſaiah* is frequently ſtyled the Evangelical Prophet, becauſe of the many and expreſs Prophecies, to be found in him, relating to *Chriſt* and his Church: Now this Prophet, in the very Entrance upon his Work, ſhews the little Value of mere legal Inſtitutions: *To what Purpoſe*, ſays he, ſpeaking in God's Name, *is the Multitude of your Sacrifices unto me?* — *I am full of the burnt Offerings of Rams, and the Fat of fed Beaſts, and I delight not in the Blood of Bullocks, or of Lambs, or of He-Goats* —— *Your new Moons, and your appointed Feaſts, my Soul hateth: They are a trouble unto me, I am weary to bear them*, Iſaiah i. 11, 14.

But the moſt remarkable Paſſage of this kind, and which deſerves our particular Attention, is the Prophecy of *Moſes* himſelf, recorded in the xviiith of *Deuteronomy*. *The Lord thy God will raiſe up unto thee a Prophet from the midſt of thee, of thy Brethren like unto me, unto him ye ſhall hearken*, ℣. 15. The ſame is repeated again, ℣. 18. with this Addition; *And it ſhall come to paſs*, (they are the Words of God) *that whoſoever will not hearken unto my Words, which he* (that Prophet) *ſhall ſpeak in my Name, I will require it of him*, ℣. 19. Here now is a plain Declaration on God's Part, at the very Time the Law was eſtabliſhed, of another Prophet, like unto *Moſes*, to be raiſed in time, as a new Lawgiver, to whom all were to yield Obedience. I know full well, that great Authorities are produced for interpreting theſe Words of a Succeſſion of Prophets, in the *Jewiſh* Church: But be the Authorities never ſo great, the Appeal lies to the Law and to the Teſtimony, and thither we muſt go.

In the firſt Place, then, the Text ſpeaks of one Prophet only in the ſingular Number,

ber, and not of many. In this Caſe therefore the *Letter* of the *Text* is with us; an Argument which ought to be of great Weight with thoſe, who make ſuch heavy Complaints, whenever we pretend to go beyond the *literal Senſe* of the old Teſtament. But,

Secondly, To expound this Paſſage, of a *Succeſſion* of Prophets, and to ſay that *they all* were to be like *Moſes*, contradicts God's own Declaration concerning the Manner, in which he intended to deal with *other* Prophets.

In the Twelfth of *Numbers* we read, that *Miriam* and *Aaron* began to mutiny againſt the Influence and Authority of *Moſes*. *Hath the Lord ſpoken only to* Moſes, ſay they, *hath he not ſpoken alſo by us?* This Controverſy was like to be attended with ſuch ill Conſequences, that God thought proper to interpoſe himſelf. Hear then his Determination; *If there be a Prophet among you, I, the Lord, Will make my ſelf known unto him in a Viſion, and will ſpeak unto him in a Dream. My Servant* Moſes *is not ſo, who is faithful in all mine Houſe, with him will*

will I ſpeak Mouth to Mouth, even apparently, and not in dark Speeches; and the Similitude of the Lord ſhall he behold: Wherefore then were ye not afraid to ſpeak againſt my Servant Moſes? Here now is a plain Declaration of the great Difference between *Moſes* and all other Prophets, and as plain an Account wherein that Difference did lie: As to all other Prophets, God declares he would ſpeak to them in *Viſions* and in *Dreams*, but with *Moſes* he would converſe *Mouth to Mouth*, or, as it is elſewhere expreſſed, *Face to Face*. Herein then conſiſted one chief Dignity and Eminence of *Moſes*; and in this Reſpect the Prophets of *Iſrael* were not to be like him.

Thirdly, That the likeneſs to *Moſes* ſpoken of in the Paſſage under Conſideration, had a ſpecial Regard to this ſingular *Privilege* of ſeeing God *Face to Face*, is evident, partly from the Text it ſelf, and partly from the Cloſe of the Book of *Deuteronomy*, compared with the Text: In the Text it ſelf, a Promiſe is given of a Prophet like *Moſes*, which Likeneſs in the 18th Verſe is expounded by God's ſaying,

ing, *I will put my Words in his Mouth:* Which imports ſomething more than ſpeaking to him in *Viſions* and in *Dreams:* And that the Likeneſs to *Moſes* was underſtood to conſiſt in this immediate Communication with God, is moſt evident from the laſt Verſes of the Book; where it is ſaid: *And there aroſe not a Prophet ſince in* Iſrael *like unto* Moſes, *whom the Lord knew Face to Face.* Who added theſe Words to the Book of *Deuteronomy*, it matters not at preſent to enquire; for, they having been receiv'd in the *Jewiſh* Church, are an authentick Teſtimony, firſt, how the antient *Jews* underſtood theſe Words, *like unto Moſes*; and *Secondly*, That the antient Church had ſeen no Prophet like unto *Moſes:* And yet they had a Succeſſion of Prophets immediately from the Death of *Moſes*, of whom *Joſhua* was the firſt *; and theſe laſt Verſes of *Deuteronomy*, added after, at leaſt in the Time of *Joſhua*, exclude him from all Pretenſions of being *the Prophet*, or *one* of the Prophets like unto *Moſes:* And if this Character will

* *Hoſ.* xii. 13. *Eccluſ.* xlvi. 1.

not

not fit *Joſhua*, much leſs will it fit thoſe who ſucceeded him, who were not greater, nor had greater Employment under God, than he: An evident Proof, that the Promiſe of a Prophet *like unto Moſes*, was not underſtood by the antient *Jewiſh* Church, to relate to a Succeſſion of Prophets among them; ſince they declare to us, that in the Succeſſion of Prophets, there had not been one *like* unto *Moſes*.

The later *Jews* have not departed from the Opinion of their Anceſtors in this reſpect. They diſtinguiſh *Moſes* from all other Prophets, and the higheſt Degree of Inſpiration is ſtyled by them *Gradus Moſaicus*. The Difference between this Degree and all others, they make to conſiſt in four Particulars. 1. *Moſes* had no Dreams nor Viſions. 2. He had Light from God immediately, without the Miniſtry or Interpoſition of Angels. 3. His Mind was never diſturbed or diſmayed by the prophetick Influence, *For God ſpake to him as a Man ſpeaks to his Friend*, 4. He cou'd propheſy at all Times when he wou'd; whereas others propheſy'd

propheſy'd only at particular Times, when the Word of God came to them †.

Another chief Dignity belonging to *Moſes*, and in which the Prophets under the Law were not like unto him, is, that he was *a Law-giver*. No Prophet after *Moſes* was ſent with ſuch a Commiſſion, during the Time of the Law; and yet the Prophet here foretold was evidently to reſemble *Moſes* in this particular. "*He was to ſpeak all that God* "*commanded him, and whoever hearkened not to him was to be deſtroyed.*" *Moſes* had no greater Authority than this, nor can any Words deſcribe a greater. Beſides, there is a Circumſtance belonging to this Prophecy, which ties it down, I think, to this Senſe. *Moſes* ſays, *God will raiſe up unto thee a Prophet like unto me, according to all that thou deſiredſt of him in* Horeb, *in the Day of the Aſſembly*, ſaying, *Let me not hear again the Voice of the Lord my God; neither let me ſee this great Fire any more, that I die not. And the Lord ſaid unto me, they have well ſpoken —— I*

(†) *See* Smith's *Select Diſcourſes, Page* 261.

will

will raiſe them up a Prophet from among their Brethren like unto thee, and will put my Words in his Mouth, and he ſhall ſpeak unto them all that I ſhall command him, &c.

It is to be obſerved, that this Requeſt of the People was made at the *giving of the Law* in *Horeb*: *Moſes* had often *propheſied* to them before, and they were not put under any Terror by it; but when the *Law* was *delivered*, and God *deſcended in Fire, and the whole Mount quaked greatly*, they deſired, that *Moſes* might ſpeak to them, and not God, leſt they ſhould die: Upon this the Promiſe is given, *I will raiſe them a Prophet like unto thee, and put my Words in his Mouth.* Is it not evident, that this new Prophet was to do that, in a familiar gentle Way, which God himſelf did in the Mount, ſurrounded with Majeſty and Terror? And was not that, the giving of the Law? To apply this Promiſe to any thing elſe, is making it to have no relation to the Requeſt upon which it was granted. The People liked *Moſes* his ordinary Way of *propheſying* to them ſo well

well, that they desired he might be employed to deliver God's Laws to them in the same Manner that he delivered God's other Comands: The Request related therefore merely to the Manner of God's giving his Law; they were under no Uneasiness at his Method in conveying Prophecies to them: And consequently the Promise of God must relate to the *giving of a Law* to his People, by one to be raised up among themselves, and not merely to a *Succession of Prophets*, about which the People were in no distress.

Lastly, If we enquire, from historical Evidence, after the Completion of this Prophecy, we shall find, that it did most punctually agree to the Character of our Blessed Saviour, and not to any other Prophet, either before or after him; all the Prophets of the Old Testament *saw Visions*, and dreamed *Dreams*; all the Prophets of the New were in the same State. St. *Peter* had a Vision, St. *John* saw Visions, St. *Paul* had Visions and Dreams: But *Christ* himself neither saw Vision, nor dream'd a Dream, but had intimate and immediate Communication

with the Father; he was in *the Father's Bosom*, he and no Man else had *seen the Father*, was *one with the Father*, and had the *Fullness of the Godhead* in him. Let any Man now seriously consider this; *Moses* and *Christ* are the *only Two*, in all the sacred History, who had this Communication with God: The Likeness to *Moses* is said directly to lie in this, of seeing *God face to face*. Can the Promise then of raising a Prophet like unto *Moses* be possibly applied to any other Person than *Christ Jesus?* The other Part of the Parallel needs not to be insisted on; that *Christ* was a Lawgiver, will be easily admitted on all Hands. But the Execution of the Threat, annexed to this Prophecy, is too remarkable to be passed over in silence; it has been literally fulfilled upon the whole Nation; every Man who considers the State of the *Jews*, from the Rejection of *Christ* to this Day, must own, that this Part of the Prophecy, at least, has been punctually verified.

This Prophecy, and many others, seem, as I observ'd, intended for the *Jews* principally, to prepare them betimes for the

Reception of a new Lawgiver, and to intimate to them, that the *Moſaic* Covenant was not to be perpetual.

Thus have I gone thro' the ſeveral Periods of Prophecy under the old Teſtament, and endeavoured to ſhew the main Deſign and Uſe of it, opening a way to a fair and impartial Conſideration of the particular Prophecies relating to each Period. I conceiv'd it ſeaſonable, at a Time when the Argument from Prophecy was expoſed to open ridicule, to ſuggeſt ſome proper Obſervations on the Subject, for the Aſſiſtance of ſerious Minds diſpoſed to conſider; to throw in one Mite, as an Offering to the Love of *Chriſt*, and his Goſpel, in which I hope to live and to die:

THREE DISSERTATIONS.

I. The Authority of the Second Epiſtle of St. PETER.

II. The Senſe of the Antients before *Chriſt*, upon the Circumſtances and Conſequences of the FALL.

III. The Bleſſing of JUDAH, *Gen.* xlix.

THREE

DISSERTATIONS.

I. The Authority of the Second Epistle of St. PETER.

II. The Style of the Ancients before Christ, upon the Circumstances and Consequences of the FALL.

III. The Blessing of JUDAH, Gen. xlix.

DISSERTATION I.

The Authority of the ſecond Epiſtle of St. PETER.

THE Occaſion I had in the Firſt of the foregoing Diſcourſes, to conſider and compare together the two Epiſtles of St *Peter*, led me to enquire into the Grounds and Reaſons of the antient Doubt, concerning the Authority and Genuineneſs of the ſecond Epiſtle. It will be worth while to examine the Fact, and ſtate it fairly; which will enable us to

judge whether this Doubt is well founded or no.

The learned *Grotius*, in his Annotations on this Epiſtle, obſerves; "That "many of the Antients were of Opinion "that this was not an Epiſtle of St. *Peter* "the Apoſtle, induced thereunto by the "difference of Style between this and "the firſt Epiſtle, (acknowledged by "*Euſebius* and *Jerom*) and by this E-"piſtle's having been rejected by many "Churches." *Huetius* * reports the Caſe more accurately, and tells us, that this ſecond Epiſtle was "*inter dubias collo-*"*cata ab aliquibus — propter ſtyli cum* "*priore diſcrepantiam*;" *reckoned doubtful by ſome becauſe the Style of it was different from that of the firſt Epiſtle.* This is the Truth of the Caſe, and this the only Reaſon, to be found in Antiquity, of the Doubt concerning this *Epiſtle*. *Grotius*'s ſecond Reaſon, *that this Epiſtle was not received in many Churches*, is too ſtrongly expreſſed, and not ſufficiently warranted. *Origen* is the firſt, as far as appears, who mentions the Doubt about

* Demonſtratio Evan. p. 21.

this

this Epiſtle: St. *Peter*, he tells us, *left one Epiſtle confeſſedly his; perhaps too a Second; for of this there is Doubt* *. *Euſebius* informs us, *That there never was any Doubt of St.* Peter's *firſt Epiſtle: But as to the Second, the Tradition was, that it was not Canonical: Nevertheleſs appearing to many*, (or to the generality) *to be a uſeful Piece, it was uſed jointly with the other Scriptures* †. That this ſecond Epiſtle was received and uſed by the Church in *Euſebius*'s Time, appears I think from this very Paſſage: He ſays it was *uſed with the other Scriptures*, and that all the Ground there was to doubt of its Authority, was an antient Tradition, which probably was no other than the Authority and Report of *Origen* before cited. That this Doubt ever affected *whole Churches*, or that there were *Churches* which rejected this Epiſtle, does not appear: If this had been the Caſe, it

* Πέτρος —— μιᾷ ἐπιστολῇ ὁμολογουμένῃ καταλέλοιπεν, ἴσως δὲ καὶ δευτέρᾳ· ἀμφιβάλλεται γάρ. Origen. apud Euſeb. Lib. 6. cap. 25.

† Τῷ δὲ φερομένῳ αὐτοῦ δευτέρᾳ, οὐκ ἐδιάθηκον μὲν οἱ πρεσβύτεροι· ὅμως δὲ πολλοῖς χρήσιμον φανὲν, μετὰ τῶν ἄλλων ἐσπουδάσθη γεγραπται. Lib. 3. cap. 3. vide cap. 25.

would have been a ſtronger Objection a-gainſt the Authority of the Epiſtle, than the antient Suſpicion, and more worthy of the Hiſtorian's Notice.

What Submiſſion is due to the Doubts of Antiquity, when we have only the Doubt tranſmitted to us, without the Reaſons upon which it was grounded, I need not enquire; but ſurely when we have the Reaſons of the Doubt preſerved, we have a very good Right to judge and enquire for our ſelves: And this happens to be the Caſe here; St. *Jerom* takes notice of this Doubt, and tells us the Reaſon of it; *The ſecond Epiſtle*, ſays he, *is rejected by many, (or by moſt*, a pleriſque) *becauſe it differs in Style from the Firſt* *.

The whole Doubt, you ſee, is founded upon a Piece of Criticiſm, ſtarted at firſt probably by ſome Man of Learning and Figure, and followed implicitly by others. The Uſage and Authority of the Church, for ought that appears to the contrary, were on the ſide of the Epiſtle, and pre-

* Quarum ſecunda à pleriſque rejicitur, propter ſtyli cum priore diſſonantiam. *Catal. Script. Eccleſ.*

vailed

vailed at laſt againſt the learned Obſervation: Which was the very Caſe of St. *Jude*'s Epiſtle, which, for a like Reaſon, was rejected by many, but the general Authority of the Church prevailed to eſtabliſh it; *autoritatem vetuſtate & uſu meruit, & inter ſanctas Scripturas computatur**.

That there is a Difference in the Style of the firſt and ſecond Epiſtles of St. *Peter*, is allowed; but it is not ſuch a Difference as ought to create any Doubt of the Genuineneſs of the Epiſtle. One Reaſon is, becauſe this difference of Style does not run through the whole Epiſtle, but affects only one Part of it; another Reaſon is, that this Difference may be more probably accounted for, than by ſuppoſing the ſecond Epiſtle to come from another Hand than the firſt.

The ſecond Epiſtle is divided into three Chapters; the firſt and the third ſtand clear of this Difficulty, agreeing very well with the Style of the firſt Epiſtle. The ſecond Chapter is full of bold Figures, and abounds in pompous Words and Ex-

* Hieron. Catal. Script. Eccl.

preſſions:

preſſions: It is a Deſcription of the falſe Prophets and Teachers, who infeſted the Church, and perverted the Doctrines of the Goſpel; and it ſeems to be an Extract from ſome antient *Jewiſh* Writer, who had left behind him a Deſcription of the falſe Prophets of his own, or perhaps earlier Times; which deſcription is applied both by St. *Peter* and St. *Jude* to the falſe Teachers of their own Times. If this be the Caſe, where is the Wonder that a Paſſage tranſcribed from another Author, and inſerted into this ſecond Epiſtle, ſhould differ in Style from St. *Peter*'s firſt Epiſtle? eſpecially, conſidering that the Style of this Paſſage differs as much from all the reſt of this ſecond Epiſtle, as it does from the firſt. St. *Jerom* * ſuppoſed, and others † have followed his Opinion, that St. *Peter* made uſe of different Interpreters to expreſs his Senſe in his two Epiſtles; but had this been the Caſe, the Difference of Style would have appeared in the *whole* Epiſtle, and not in *one* Part of it only, which is

* Epiſt. ad Hedibiam quæſt. 2.
† Eſtius, Calmet, *&c.*

the

the preſent State: And I ſee no Reaſon to think that St. *Peter* did not write both his Epiſtles himſelf.

Were this nothing but a Conjecture, yet ſo reaſonable an one it is, that the Doubt raiſed againſt this ſecond Epiſtle, merely from this Difference of Style, could hardly ſtand before it. But we can go further, and ſhew upon very probable Grounds that this was indeed the Caſe.

The very Beginning of the ſecond Chapter, of this ſecond Epiſtle, ſhews that St. *Peter* had the Image of ſome antient falſe Prophets before him, in deſcribing the falſe Teachers of his own Time: *There were falſe Prophets alſo among the People, even as there ſhall be falſe Teachers among you*, ℣. 1. If you conſider the Character he gives of theſe falſe Teachers, it will appear to be drawn from the Deſcription of the old falſe Prophets; *ſuch they are*, he tells us, *as have forſaken the right Way, and are gone aſtray, following the Way of* Balaam *the Son of* Boſor, *who loved the Wages of Unrighteouſneſs*, ℣. 15. A very natural Thought this, and to be expected, in a Deſcription of falſe Prophets

Prophets made by an antient *Jewiſh* Writer; but ſuch an one as hardly wou'd have occurred in an original Deſcription of the falſe Teachers under the Goſpel; St. *Jude* has this Compariſon, and others of the ſame kind joined with it: *They have gone in the Way of* Cain, *and ran greedily after the Error of* Balaam, *and periſhed in the Gain-ſaying of* Core. *v.* 11. Theſe are antique Figures and diſcover the Age to which they belong: And St. *Jude* tells us plainly that theſe falſe Teachers were πάλαι προγεγραμμένοι εἰς τοῦτο τὸ κρίμα, *deſcribed or ſet forth of old for this Condemnation*; and 'tis very likely that both St. *Peter* and he had the old Deſcription before them, when they gave the Character of the falſe Teachers of their own Times. St. *Jude*'s Epiſtle is ſo like the ſecond Chapter of St. *Peter*'s ſecond Epiſtle, the Figures and Images in both are ſo much the ſame, as likewiſe the antient Examples and Inſtances made uſe of, that it has been commonly thought that St. *Jude* copied after St. *Peter*'s Epiſtle: And yet the Turn of Words and Expreſſions are ſo different; the Choice of

Matter

Matter likewiſe is in Part ſo different, ſome things being mentioned in one, and omitted in the other; that 'tis much more probable that both copied from the ſame Original, and drew from it according to their own Judgments. I will give ſome Inſtances of this, and leave the reſt to the Reader's own Examination:

St. Peter, ℣. 4.

Εἰ γὰρ ὁ Θεὸς ἀγγέλων ἁμαρτησάντων οὐκ ἐφείσατο, ἀλλὰ ζόφου ταρταρώσας, παρέδωκεν εἰς κρίσιν τηρουμένους.

St. Jude, ℣. 6.

Ἀγγέλους τε τοὺς μὴ τηρήσαντας τὴν ἑαυτῶν ἀρχὴν, ἀλλὰ ἀπολιπόντας τὸ ἴδιον οἰκητήριον, εἰς κρίσιν μεγάλης ἡμέρας, δεσμοῖς ἀϊδίοις ὑπὸ ζόφον τετήρηκεν.

℣. 6. Πόλεις Σοδόμων καὶ Γομόρρας τεφρώσας καταστροφῇ κατέκρινεν, ὑπόδειγμα μελλόντων ἀσεβεῖν τεθεικώς.

℣. 7. Ὡς Σόδομα καὶ Γόμορρα, καὶ αἱ περὶ αὐτὰς πόλεις τὸν ὅμοιον τούτοις τρόπον ἐκπορνεύσασαι, καὶ ἀπελθοῦσαι ὀπίσω σαρκὸς ἑτέρας.

℣. 11.

℣. 11. Ἄγγελοι ἰσχύϊ καὶ δυνάμει μείζονες ὄντες, οὐ φέρουσι κατ' αὐτῶν παρὰ Κυρίῳ βλάσφημον κρίσιν.	℣. 9. Ὁ δὲ Μιχαὴλ ὁ ἀρχάγγελος, ὅτε τῷ διαβόλῳ διακρινόμενος διελέγετο περὶ τοῦ Μωσέως σώματος. κ. τ. λ.

St. *Peter* ſpeaks of the *Angels* that *ſinned*, St. *Jude* gives an account of their Sin, that they *kept not their firſt Eſtate, but left their own Habitation:* This Account of the Angels Sin is no where elſe to be found in Scripture, but was, if I may gueſs, in the old Book from which St. *Jude* tranſcribed; for 'tis very unlikely that he ſhould add theſe Circumſtances, if he had only St. *Peter*'s ἀγγέλων ἁμαρτησάντων, before him. The very ſame Difference may be obſerved in ſetting forth the Example of *Sodom* and *Gomorrha*, which is common to both Epiſtles; St. *Peter ſpeaks only of their* Judgment, and of their being made an Example to Sinners: St. *Jude* adds an Account of their Crime: And though, as far as the two Epiſtles agree in reſpect to this Inſtance, the Images and Ideas are the ſame, yet the Turn of Expreſſion is very different.

Again:

Again, St. *Peter* ℣. 11. in reproof of the Presumptuous and Self-willed who *speak Evil of Dignities*, says, *That Angels which are greater in Power and Might bring not railing Accusations against them before the Lord*; but here St. *Jude* has given us the History to which this belongs, *Michael the Arch-Angel, when contending with the Devil about the Body of* Moses, *durst not bring against him a railing Accusation, but said, the Lord rebuke thee*, ℣. 9. These Instances shew that St. *Jude* did not merely copy from St. *Peter*, but had Recourse to the Original it self, where these Instances stood recorded, and took from thence such Circumstances as he thought proper to set these Examples in their full Light.

If we compare the different Manners of expressing the same thing in the two Epistles, we shall hardly imagine that St. *Peter* and St. *Jude* had the same Language before them to transcribe; 'tis much more probable that they both translated from some old *Hebrew* Book; which will account for the Difference of Language between them, and the great

Agreement in their Images and Ideas. The following Inſtance will make my Meaning plain:

2 Peter ii. ℣. 6.	*St.* Jude, ℣. 7.
Καὶ πόλεις Σοδόμων καὶ Γομόῤῥας τεφρώσας κατασρο φῇ κατέκεινεν, ὑπόδειγμα μελλόντων ἀσεβεῖν τεθεικώς.	Ὡς Σόδομα καὶ Γόμορρα κ. τ. λ. πρόκειν) δεῖγμα, πυρὸς αἰωνίου δίκην ὑπέχουσαι.
℣. 10. Μάλισα δὲ τοὺς ὀπίσω σαρκὸς ἐν ἐπιθυμίᾳ μιασμοῦ πορευομένους καὶ κυριότητος καταφρονοῦντας, τολμηταὶ, αὐθάδεις, δόξας οὐ τρέμουσι βλασφημοῦντες.	℣. 8. Ὁμοίως μέντοι καὶ οὗτοι ἐνυπνιαζόμενοι, σάρκα μὲν μιαίνουσι, κυριότητα δὲ ἀθετοῦσι, δόξας δὲ βλασφημοῦσιν.
℣. 12. Οὗτοι δὲ, ὡς ἄλογα ζῶα φυσικὰ, γεγεννημένα εἰς ἅλωσιν καὶ φθοράν, ἐν οἷς ἀγνοοῦσι βλασφημοῦντες, ἐν τῇ φθορᾷ αὐτῶν, καταφθαρήσον).	℣. 10. Οὗτοι δὲ ὅσα μὲν οὐκ οἴδασι βλασφημοῦσιν· ὅσα δὲ φυσικῶς, ὡς τὰ ἄλογα ζῶα, ἐπίσαν), ἐν τούτοις φθείρον).

In

In theſe Inſtances the Language of St. *Jude* is much plainer and ſimpler than St. *Peter*'s, and repreſents the Meaning common to both Epiſtles, much more intelligibly; and whoever will be at the Pains to examine the two Epiſtles carefully, will find more Inſtances of this kind; where the Sentiments and Notions are the ſame, and the manners of Expreſſion very different. Whence can proceed this Agreement and Diſagreement at once? Had one tranſcribed the other, or had both copied from the ſame *Greek* Author, the Language of one Epiſtle would probably have anſwered more nearly to the Language of the other; and yet the Sentiments and Notions of the two Epiſtles are ſo much the ſame, that we muſt needs ſuppoſe the two Writers to follow one and the ſame Copy; and if we ſuppoſe this Copy to have been in the *Jewiſh* Language, and that each Writer tranſlated for himſelf, this will anſwer the whole Appearence, and account as well for their Difference as their Agreement. The Difference, which appears in the parallel Places, laſt

quoted, may indeed be accounted for upon the Suppoſition that St. *Jude* tranſcribed from St. *Peter*. He might intend perhaps to make plain the abſtruſe Paſſages, and to that end might make Choice of a plainer Way of expreſſing himſelf. But the former Paſſages cannot be thus accounted for, which will appear if we conſider further:

That the ſubject Matter, common to theſe two Epiſtles, was without Doubt taken from ſome old *Jewiſh* Author by one or both of theſe Writers. That St. *Jude* had the old Book before him, and did not merely copy after St. *Peter*, is evident, for he expreſsly quotes *Enoch*, meaning either a Book under that Name and Title, or, which is more probable, ſome antient Book of *Jewiſh* Traditions, in which ſome Prophecies of *Enoch* were recorded. St. *Jude* by telling us whence *he* had *his* Deſcription of the falſe Prophets, has informed us, at the ſame time, whence St. *Peter* had the Materials of the ſecond Chapter of his ſecond Epiſtle; which is the very ſame Deſcription, with ſuch Varieties, as have already been obſerved.

ſerved. It is very remarkable, that, notwithſtanding this great Agreement between the two Epiſtles, St. *Peter* has an Inſtance not to be found in St. *Jude*; and St. *Jude* has another not to be found in St. *Peter*. St. *Jude* quotes the Prophecy of *Enoch*, of which St. *Peter* ſays nothing; St. *Peter* refers to the *Preaching* of *Noah*, of which St. *Jude* ſays nothing: Suppoſing one to be a mere Tranſcriber of the other, 'tis hard to account for this Variation; eſpecially, conſidering that the Preaching referred to by St. *Peter*, under the Name of *Noah*, and the Prophecy referred to by St. *Jude*, under the Name of *Enoch*, relate to one and the ſame thing, the Deſtruction of the old World. But if you will ſuppoſe both Apoſtles to uſe an antient *Jewiſh* Book, in which the Prophecies of *Enoch* and *Noah*, relating to the Flood, were recorded, 'tis eaſy to account for the Reference to *Noah* by St. *Peter*, to *Enoch* by St. *Jude*.

This may ſerve to account for the different Styles in St. *Peter*'s two Epiſtles, obſerved of old: I add, and for the Difference of Style, in the ſecond Epiſtle it-

ſelf, for the Style of the ſecond Chapter is no more like to that of the other two, than it is to that of the firſt Epiſtle. When a Man expreſſes his own Sentiments, he writes in its own proper Style, be it what it will; but when he tranſlates from another, he naturally follows the Genius of the Original, and adopts the Figures and Metaphors of the Author before him. The *Eaſtern* Languages abound in high ſwelling Ways of Expreſſion; and you may find in this one Chapter of St. *Peter*, more Reſemblance of this Manner, than in any other Part of the new Teſtament; which is a further Confirmation of the Account which I have given.

But if this will help to clear one Difficulty, will it not neceſſarily ſubject this ſecond Epiſtle of St. *Peter* to another? It is an old Objection againſt the Authority of St. *Jude*'s Epiſtle, that he quotes the ſpurious Book of *Enoch*, and, for this very Reaſon, * his Epiſtle was placed

* Judas frater Jacobi parvam, quæ de ſeptem Catholicis eſt, Epiſtolam reliquit. Et quia de Libro Enoch, qui Apocryphus eſt, in eo aſſumit teſtimonium, à pleriſq; rejicitur. Tamen authoritatem vetuſtate jam & uſu meruit, & inter Sanctas Scripturas computatur. *Hieron. Catalog. Script. Eccl.*

among

among the ἀντιλεγόμενα, or doubtful, by the Antients. And is not *Peter*'s ſecond Epiſtle become liable to the very ſame Charge?

I will not trouble the Reader with a long Account, or any Account of the ſpurious Book under the Name of *Enoch*, which made a very early Appearence in the Chriſtian Church, and is quoted by *Irenæus*, *Origen*, and others about the ſame Time. Whoever pleaſes to know the State of this Book, may conſult *Fabricius*, in his *Codex Pſeud. Vet. Teſt.* But,

'Tis no Wonder that ſome antient Chriſtians who took it for granted, that St. *Jude* quoted the ſame Book, which they had under the Name of *Enoch*, made it an Objection againſt the Authority of his Epiſtle. For this Book *Enoch* was a mere Romance, and full of the idle Inventions of ſome Helleniſtick *Jew*. But then, there is not the leaſt Evidence that this ſpurious Book was extant in the Days of the Apoſtles; nor indeed any kind of Proof that St. *Jude* quotes a Book called *Enoch*; it is more likely that he quoted

ſome antient Book containing the Traditions of the *Jewiſh* Church which has been long ſince loſt; and probably contained many things relating to other antient Patriarchs and Prophets, as well as to *Enoch*. The Loſs of which was miſerably ſupplied by forging Books under the Names of the Patriarchs: To this we owe the *Life of* Adam, *the Book of* Seth, *the Teſtaments of the Patriarchs*, and many others of the like Nature, which were ſpread abroad in very early Days of the Church.

What the true antient Book was, which St. *Jude* quoted, by whom penned, or what Authority it had in the *Jewiſh* Church, no Mortal can tell: This only we know, it was not among their *canonical* Books. But let the Book be ſuppoſed to have been of as little Authority as you pleaſe, yet if it contained a good Deſcription of the ancient falſe Prophets, why might not St. *Peter* and St. *Jude* make uſe of that Deſcription, as well as St. *Paul* quote Heathen Poets? St. *Peter* plainly makes no other Uſe of it, and therefore ſtands clear of countenancing the Authority

rity of the Book: St *Jude* goes further, and quotes a Prophecy out of it, as being an authentick one: and can you tell that it was not an authentick Prophecy? I am ſure the Prophecy itſelf, as reported in St. *Jude*'s Epiſtles, was well founded, and was duly accompliſhed; and is in truth but the very Prophecy which came from God to *Noah*; and very probably had been communicated before to *Enoch* and by him to the old World. Was it ever made an Objection againſt the Authority of St. *Paul*'s ſecond Epiſtle to *Timothy*, that he quotes ſome antient Apocryphal Book for the Story of *Jannes* and *Jambres*? Or is it any Diminution to the Authority of the Goſpel, that our Saviour (as many learned think) quotes another ſuch Book, under the Title of the *Wiſdom of God*, * and appeals to it, as containing antient Prophecies? If not, how comes it to be an Objection againſt St. *Jude*'s Epiſtle, that he quotes a Prophecy of *Enoch* from the like Authority?

For theſe Reaſons, little regard is due to the Objection of the Antients, againſt

* Luke xi. 49.

the

the Authority of St. *Jude*'s Epiſtle: They ſuppoſed their ſpurious extravagant Book *Enoch*, to be the Book quoted by St. *Jude*; and they reaſoned upon this Suppoſition; for which in the mean time, there was not the leaſt Appearence of Proof, or Evidence; and the Epiſtle itſelf was univerſally received in the Churches, notwithſtanding this Piece of Criticiſm, as we are inform'd by St. *Jerom*, in the Paſſage before quoted.

There are indeed ſome Notions in which theſe two Epiſtles agree, and which could not poſſibly be drawn from any antient *Jewiſh* Book; for theſe Notions of which I now ſpeak, are *Chriſtian* Notions peculiar to the Times of the Gospel.

The Paſſages which ſhew this Agreement, are theſe chiefly which follow:

2 Peter ii.	Jude.
℣. 1. Ψευδοδιδάσκαλοι, οἵτινες παρεισάξουσιν αἱρέσεις ἀπωλείας, καὶ	℣. 4. Παρεισέδυσαν γάρ τινες ἄνθρωποι, ἀσεβεῖς, τὴν τοῦ Θεοῦ χάριν

ἀγοράσαντα αὐτὸς
πότην ἀρνούμενοι.

χάριν μετατιθέντες εἰς
ἀσέλγειαν, καὶ τὸν μόνον
δεσπότην Θεὸν καὶ Κύ-
ριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν
ἀρνούμενοι.

Ver. 13. Σπίλοι καὶ
μοι, συνευωχούμενοι ἐν
ταῖς ἀγάπαις αὐτῶν, συ-
ωχούμενοι ὑμῖν.

Ver. 12. Οὗτοί εἰσιν
ἐν ταῖς ἀγάπαις ὑμῶν
σπιλάδες, συνευωχού-
μενοι.

Ch. iii. 2, 3. Μνη-
σθῆναι τῶν προειρημένων
ῥημάτων ὑπὸ τῶν ἁγίων
προφητῶν, καὶ τῆς τῶν ἀπο-
στόλων ἡμῶν ἐντολῆς, τοῦ
κυρίου καὶ σωτῆρος· τοῦ-
το πρῶτον γινώσκοντες,
ὅτι ἐλεύσονται ἐπ' ἐσχά-
των ἡμερῶν ἐμπαῖκται,
κατὰ τὰς ἰδίας αὐτῶν
ἐπιθυμίας πορευόμενοι.

Ver. 17, 18. Ὑμεῖς δέ,
ἀγαπητοί, μνήσθητε τῶν
ῥημάτων τῶν προειρημέ-
νων ὑπὸ τῶν ἀποστόλων
τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ
Χριστοῦ. Ὅτι ἔλεγον
ὑμῖν ὅτι ἐν ἐσχάτῳ χρόνῳ
ἔσονται ἐμπαῖκται,
κατὰ τὰς ἑαυτῶν ἐπιθυμί-
ας πορευόμενοι τῶν ἀσε-
βειῶν.

In the first of these Passages, the Παρεισέδυσαν of St. *Jude* has a plain Resemblance and Reference to the Παρεισάξουσιν of St. *Peter*; both Words are formed on the same Notion, and are meant to describe the Craft and subtle Insinuation

of

of the new falſe Teachers. The turni
χάριν εἰς ἀσέλγειαν in St. *Jude*, anſwers t
αἱρέσεις ἀπωλείας in St. *Peter*; and
the reſt, the Paſſages are nearly t
ſame, and refer to Goſpel Notions.

If the ſecond Paſſage of St. *Peter*
read, as it ought to be, according to t
Alexandrian Manuſcript, which has ἀ
παις inſtead of ἀπάταις, it agrees exa
with St. *Jude*'s; and the Feaſts pecu
to *Chriſtians* are meant in both Pla
The third Paſſage relates to the Apo
of *Chriſt*; and it is the principal Paſ
to incline one to think that St. *Jude*
St. *Peter*'s Epiſtle before him; for
ſeems to take what is proper to his o
Purpoſe, and the Subject of his Epi
and to leave that which has a peculiar
ference, to the former Part of St. *Pet*
Epiſtle, and to which there is not
in his own to anſwer: St. *Peter* in
firſt Chapter of this ſecond Epiſtle,
likewiſe in his firſt Epiſtle, tells the C
ſtians of the *antient Prophecies*,
ſhewing the Deliverance near at H
He warns them likewiſe againſt the
falſe Teachers in this ſecond Ep

There

herefore collecting the Purpoſe of his piſtles, he ſays that he wrote to them remind them, 1. *Of the Words which ere ſpoken before by the holy Prophets:* And of the Command *of the Apoſtles*, hich Command reſpected the Scoffers the laſt Days. But St. *Jude*, who had d nothing of the antient Prophecies, d had ſpent his whole Epiſtle in deribing the Iniquity of the falſe Teachs, reminds them only of the *Words oken by the Apoſtles of* Chriſt Jeſus, ho had, together with the Doctrine delered to them, forewarned them, that *ere ſhould be Mockers in the laſt Time.* I ſee no Inconvenience in ſuppoſing at St. *Jude* had as well the Epiſtle of *Peter*, as the old *Jewiſh* Book, which ntained the Deſcription of the ancient lſe Prophets and the Prophecy of *Enoch* ncerning them, before him at the ſame ime. If theſe laſt Paſſages prove that had St. *Peter*'s Epiſtle, his expreſs oting of *Enoch* ſhews that he had the her. In following the old Book, and enrging from thence the Inſtances made uſe f by St. *Peter*, and expreſſing in Words f his own the Sentiments of the original

ginal Author, without confining him
ſelf to the Verſion of St. *Peter*, he di
no more than is natural for any Man t
to do in a like Caſe. But perhaps ther
may be another Account to be given o
this Agreement between theſe two Ep
ſtles, by referring them to ſome furth
common Source or Original.

St. *Jude* calls upon the *Chriſtians* t
whom he wrote, to remember τ ῥημάτ
ωροειρημένων ὑπὸ τ Ἀποςόλων τ Κυρίε ἡμ
Ἰησ Χρισ; *The Words which were ſp
ken before of the Apoſtles of* Chriſt. The
who do not place St. *Jude* in the Num
ber of Apoſtles, are under no Difficult
here; it was natural for one of a lowe
Rank to refer to the Authority and Pre
dictions of *Chriſt*'s Apoſtles. But wh
muſt we ſay for St. *Peter*, who make
the ſame Appeal, and was undoubtedl
an Apoſtle of *Chriſt* himſelf? Did he thin
that he had leſs Authority, or was leſs t
be regarded than other Apoſtles? Or fo
what Reaſon did he appeal to that Autho
rity in others, which he had Right to in
ſiſt on himſelf? This Matter is ſomethin
mended by our *Engliſh* Verſion, *Be mind*

al —— *of the Commands of US, the Apoſtles of the Lord and Saviour.* But he Order of the Words in our *Greek* Copies will not bear this rendring; τῶν Ἀποστόλων ἡμῶν: to anſwer our Verſion we muſt read ἡμῶν τῶν Ἀποστόλων: Thus St. *Paul* often ſpeaks, ἐγὼ Παῦλος, *I Paul:* but never Παῦλος ἐγὼ, *Paul I.* And ſince here is evidently a Diſlocation of the Word ἡμῶν in St. *Peter*, and it muſt be placed elſewhere, it ought probably to be placed, as St. *Jude* has placed it, after λεγὸν: and then the *Engliſh* Verſion muſt be thus —— *The Commandment of the Apoſtles of our Lord and Saviour.*

There muſt be ſomething particular in this Caſe; otherwiſe, for an Apoſtle to appeal to the Authority of Apoſtles, as ſomething ſuperior to his own, is not very natural. But if we ſuppoſe that the Apoſtles had a Meeting upon this great Caſe of the *new falſe Teachers*, and that they gave jointly, by common Conſent and Deliberation, *Precepts* proper to the Occaſion, to be communicated to all Churches, no ſingle Apoſtle wou'd, or cou'd, in this Caſe, call the common Injunc-

tion *his Commandment*, but wou'd certainly call it, in the Language of St. *Peter*, *the Commandment of the Apoſtles of our Lord.* St. *Paul* was an Apoſtle, yet was it no Diſparagement to him to carry the Decree of the Council of *Jeruſalem* to the Churches of his Plantation; and, in writing, or ſpeaking, he could not but have called it the *Decree of the Apoſtles.* The Caſe might be the ſame here.

We have ſome Evidence to ſhew that this was the Caſe. That there was ſuch a Tradition, at leaſt, in the Church, is evident from the *Apoſtolical Conſtitutions*: In which there is mention made of a Meeting of the Apoſtles upon the very Account of theſe falſe Teachers, ſo particularly deſcribed by St. *Peter* and St. *Jude*. In the thirteenth Chapter of the ſixth Book, theſe falſe Teachers are deſcribed to be ſuch as, πολεμοῦσι Χριστῷ καὶ Μωσεῖ, *fight againſt* Chriſt *and* Moſes, pretending, at the ſame time, to value both: And thus the falſe Teachers, mentioned in both Epiſtles, communicated with the Church whilſt they corrupted its Faith: They were, ἐν ταῖς ἀγάπαις σπιλάδες, *Spots in the Churches*

Churches Feasts, Jude, ℣. 12. They are ordered to be expelled in the Apostolical Constitutions that the Lambs might be preserved ὑγιᾶ καὶ ἄσπιλα, *Sound and without Spot.* They are represented in the Apostolical Constitutions, *as the false Christians and false Prophets foretold* in the Gospel. — Θεὸν βλασφημοῦντες, καὶ τὸν ἴδιον αἵματι καθαπατῶντες; which agrees exactly with St. *Jude*'s Account of them, — that they had been foretold by the Apostles, and that they *denyed the only Lord God, and our Lord* Jesus Christ. ℣. 4. And with St. *Peter*'s likewise, — *Who bring in damnable Heresies, denying the Lord that bought them*, Chap. ii. ℣. 1.

At this Meeting, 'tis said, Instructions were given to be communicated to all Churches by their respective Apostles and Bishops; there were probably then many circular Letters sent upon this Occasion; the second Epistle of St. *Peter* and St. *Jude*'s Epistle seem to be of this sort; and being drawn upon the same Occasion, and upon the same Instructions; 'tis no Wonder they agree so well together.

There are in the Epiſtles themſelves ſome Marks which confirm the foregoing Account: The very Word [ἐντολῆς] uſed by St. *Peter*, when he makes mention of the Apoſtles Authority, points out ſome particular and diſtinguiſhed Precept: For he does not ſeem to refer to the general Preaching, or Doctrines of the Apoſtles, but to ſome *ſpecial Command*, or Form of Doctrine relating to the falſe Teachers. This is that ἐντολὴ παραδοθεῖσα mentioned in the Cloſe of the foregoing Chapter, *the Commandment delivered to the Faithful*, to guard them againſt the Corruptions of the falſe Teachers, and to ſhew them τ ὁδὸν τ δικαιοσύνης, *The Way of Righteouſneſs*. This Warning, ſo ſolemnly given, would, as the Apoſtle inſiſts, be an Aggravation in the Caſe of all ſuch as having been made *thus* acquainted with the Way of Righteouſneſs, ſhould nevertheleſs turn aſide ἐκ τ παραδοθείσης αὐτοῖς ἁγίας ἐντολῆς: *From the holy Commandment delivered unto them.*

St. *Jude* plainly ſays that his Epiſtle was wrote purely upon the Account of the falſe Teachers: That his Intentions were

were to have written to them, περὶ τ κοινῆς σωτηρίας, of the common Doctrines of Salvation; but that he had quitted the Design being *neceſſitated* (ἀνάγκλω ἔχον) to write to them to ſtrive for the Faith delivered to the Saints, in oppoſition to the falſe Teachers who had ſtollen in among them.

The Senſe of this Paſſage is loſt in our Tranſlation, as it is likewiſe in both the Interpretations propoſed by *Eraſmus*; upon the Place, in which he has been followed by moſt of thoſe, who came after him. Interpreters have been miſled by confounding the κοινὴ σωτηρία, and the παραδοθεῖσα πίστις together, as if they meant one and the ſame thing; whereas they mean quite different Things. The *common Salvation*, here ſpoken of, means the Doctrines of the Goſpel publiſhed to all the World without reſpect to Difference of Times or Seaſons; or to particular Doctrines of the Corrupters of the Faith: The παραδοθεῖσα πίστις, is the ſame with the παραδοθεῖσα ὑγιαινὴ in St. *Peter*, the *Form of ſound Doctrine*, ſent to all the Churches, by Direction of the Apoſtles,

ſtles, in oppoſition to the falſe Teachers. This then is the Meaning of St. *Jude*, and thus it may be paraphraſed: "Beloved, "I was intent upon the Deſign of writ- "ing to you upon the common Doc- "trines and Hopes of the Goſpel, for the "Improvement of your Faith and Know- "ledge in *Chriſt Jeſus*; but I find my "ſelf obliged to lay aſide this Deſign, "and to warn you againſt a preſent Dan- "ger, to exhort you to earneſtneſs in "contending for that true Doctrine once "already delivered to you and all the "Faithful, in Oppoſition to the falſe "Teachers, who are crept in unawares "among you" ——.

The *Arabick* and *Ethiopick* Verſions have both preſerved this Senſe in ſome Meaſure; the *Arabick* comes very near the true Meaning; the Senſe of which the *Latin* Interpreter has thus expreſſed, *O dilecti mei, omni Studio adhibito ut ſcriberem vobis de ſalute perfecta univerſali, atque communi, coactus ſum ſcribere vobis, deprecans ut ſoliciti ſitis in fide quæ ſemel tradita eſt ſanctis.* The *Ethiopick* Verſion ſpeaks of this *Faith once*

once delivered to the Saints as ſuperadded to the common Teaching, and conſequently as diſtinct from the κοινὴ σωτηρία, *the common Salvation.*

But to come nearer our Point, the Agreement of the two Epiſtles in the Deſcription of the falſe Teachers; it is to be obſerved that both St. *Peter* and St. *Jude* profeſs to write as reminding their Churches of Things with which they had before been made acquainted. * St. *Jude* ſays expreſsly that the very Subject of this Letter had once already been known unto them: ὑπομνῆσαι δὲ ὑμᾶς βούλομαι, εἰδότας ὑμᾶς ἅπαξ τοῦτο ὅτι ὁ κύριος λαὸν ἐκ γῆς Αἰγύπτου, κ. τ. λ. The Word (ἅπαξ) uſed here is the ſame we met with before; the ἅπαξ παραδοθεῖσα πίστις, and the εἰδότας ὑμᾶς ἅπαξ τοῦτο are relative to the ſame matter; and it appears that the Warning againſt the falſe Teachers, and the prophetick Deſcription of them were ſent to the Churches together with the ἐντολὴ) Commandment. It appears likewiſe that both St. *Peter* and St. *Jude*

* Compare 2 *Pet.* iii. ℣. 2. with *Jude* v. ℣. 5.

wrote their Epiſtles, after this Commandment had been delivered to the ſeveral Churches; for they write to them, *reminding* them of what they had before received.

This being the Caſe, there is no Neceſſity to ſuppoſe that St. *Jude* tranſcribed St. *Peter*'s Epiſtle: 'Tis much more probable that both he and St. *Peter* wrote from the common Plan communicated to the Churches; and drew their Deſcription of the falſe Teachers from the ſame apochryphal Book. But be this as it will, yet upon all Views the ſecond Epiſtle of St. *Peter* ſtands clear of the old Objection drawn from the Difference of Style between his firſt and ſecond Epiſtles.

DISSERTATION II.

The Senſe of the Antients before CHRIST *upon the Circumſtances and Conſequences of the Fall.*

MY Intention is not to ſearch after Paſſages in Heathen Authors, which may ſeem to bear ſome Reſemblance to the *Moſaick* Hiſtory of the Fall, but to trace the Senſe of the *Jewiſh* Church as far as it can be collected.

As there are no Records left, but the Books of the old Teſtament, to give Light to this Enquiry, and no Book of the old

Teſtament, after *Moſes*, treats directly of this Subject; it cannot be expected that I ſhould produce a full and regular Expoſition of the Circumſtances and Conſequences of *the Fall*, from ſo few Remains, and in this reſpect ſo very imperfect. All that can be done, is to gather up the little which fell from theſe old Writers, rather accidentally, than purpoſely; and to try whether, from their References and Alluſions to this Hiſtory, we can with any tolerable Degree of Probability, collect their Senſe, or the Senſe of the Times, in which they lived, upon this Subject. The Hiſtorical Writers of the old Teſtament were never led within view of this antient Story, by the Occurrences in which they are concerned; from them conſequently no Light is to be expected. Moral Writers had ſometimes Occaſion to reflect upon the State of the World, and to conſider how things came into the State and Condition, in which they found them: Prophets likewiſe, who were Teachers of Religion, were in the ſame Caſe; from theſe we may expect ſome Aſſiſtance.

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You ſee within how narrow a Compaſs we are reduced; but yet no Help is to be refuſed which can be had in ſo material a Concern.

The moral and theological Difficulties, relating to this point will not be ſtated or diſcuſſed upon the Foot of this Enquiry. It was the Wiſdom of Antiquity to bury all ſuch Difficulties, in the Abyſs of infinite Wiſdom and Power, and there to leave them till God ſhould think proper to bring them to Light; and had we ſomething of the ſame Spirit, it would be the better for us. But the moſt curious and inquiſitive have no Reaſon to expect a Solution of all the Difficulties of this ſort, from the Teachers of the Goſpel. For what has the Goſpel to do with them? The moral and natural Evils in the World were not *introduced* by the Goſpel; why then muſt the Goſpel be called upon to account for them, rather than any other Religion, or Sect of Philoſophy? If there had never been an old Teſtament, never a new one, Mankind wou'd have been at leaſt as corrupt and miſerable as they are at preſent. What harm then have the

old

old and the new Teſtament done to you, that you perpetually challenge them to account to you for the Evil you ſuffer? You miſlike perhaps the Story of *Adam* and *Eve*, and can by no Means digeſt the Account of the *Serpent's* tempting, and prevailing againſt our firſt Parents: Very well; let this Account then be laid aſide, and what are you now the better? Is there not the *ſame Evil* remaining in the World, whether you believe, or believe not the Story of the Fall? And if ſo, what Account do YOU pretend to give of it? for if you pretend to any Religion you are as liable to be called to this Account, as any Profeſſor or Teacher of the Goſpel. No Body is exempt in this Caſe, but the Athieſt; and his Privilege comes from hence, that he has no Account to give of any thing; for all Difficulties are alike upon this Scheme.

Leaving then theſe Difficulties, which are common to all Religions, and not peculiar to our preſent Enquiry, let us proceed to trace the Hiſtory of the Fall in the antient Writers,

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The oldeſt Book we have remaining, is the Book of *Job*; there is all the Appearence, that can ariſe from internal Characters, that it was written before any of the Books of *Moſes*. The Teſtimony therefore of this Book is diſtinct from the Authority of *Moſes*, ſince it was not derived from the Books of *Moſes*, but was it ſelf an original Account of the State of Nature and Religion in the old World, before *Moſes* had committed any thing to Writing. I know that ſome have endeavoured to bring down this antient Writer to the Times of the *Babyloniſh* Captivity, and ſuppoſe the Book to have been written for the Conſolation of the Captives in their Diſtreſs. But if you ſuppoſe it written for the ſake of the *Jews*, is it not ſtrange that there ſhould not be in a Diſcourſe of ſuch a kind, one ſingle Word of the Law of *Moſes*; nor ſo much as one diſtant Alluſion to any Rite or Ceremony of the Law, or any one Piece of Hiſtory later than *Moſes*; nor to any of the Forms of Idolatry, for which the *Jews* ſuffered, at the Time of their Captivity? The Conjecture would be as ingenious and

as well founded, ſhould any Critick ſuppoſe, that the *Iliads* of *Homer* were written to celebrate the military Expeditions of the *Goths* and *Vandals*. Beſides, were it proper to enter into the Diſcuſſion of this Point it might be eaſily ſhew'd that the Book of *Job* had quite another View, than this Opinion ſuppoſes. The *Patience* of *Job* is much talked of, and we ſeldom look further for any Uſe of this Book: But in Truth the Book was written in Oppoſition to the very antient Opinion, which introduced two independent Principles, one of Good, the other of Evil. For this Reaſon *Satan*, the Author of *Job*'s Misfortunes, is brought in with a Permiſſion from God to afflict *Job*; and the Moral of the Hiſtory lies in *Job*'s Reflection; *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away:* And again, *Shall we receive Good at the Hand of God, and ſhall we not receive Evil? In all which*, as the Hiſtory expreſsly obſerves, *Job did not ſin with his Lips*; intimating how prone Men were to ſin with their Lips, when they talked of the Evils of Life and the Author of them. The learn-

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ed *Grotius* ſuppoſes this Book to be written for the Conſolation of the Deſcendents of *Eſau*, carried away in the *Babyloniſh* Captivity; he ſaw plainly, I ſuppoſe, that the Book cou'd, by no means, anſwer to the Caſe of the *Jews*, as well for the Reaſons already mentioned, as for this likewiſe, That the *Jews* undoubtedly ſuffered for their Iniquity; and the Example of *Job*, is the Example of an innocent Man ſuffering for no Demerit of his own: Apply this to the *Jews* in their Captivity, and the Book contradicts all the Prophets, before, and at the Time of the Captivity, and is calculated to harden the *Jews* in their Sufferings, and to reproach the Providence of God. But ſuppoſe it writ for the Children of *Eſau*; they were Idolaters, and yet is there no Alluſion to their Idolatry in all this Book; and what ground is there to think that *they* were *ſo righteous*, as to deſerve ſuch an Interpretation to be put upon their Sufferings as the Book of *Job* puts on them, if ſo be it was written for their ſakes? Or can it be imagined, that a Book, writ about the Time ſuppoſed, for the

Uſe of an *Idolatrous* Nation, and odious to the *Jews*, cou'd ever have been received into the *Jewiſh* Canon? Whatever therefore we may think of the Book, in its preſent *State*, there is little doubt but that it was formed upon *authentick Records*, of greater Antiquity than any Book now remaining.

The Antiquity of the Book ſuppoſed, two Queſtions ariſe to be conſidered, 1. Whether the Fall of *Adam* was known to this antient Writer: 2. What Notion he had of the Circumſtances and Conſequences of the Fall.

The xx^th^ Chapter of *Job* contains the Diſcourſe of *Sophar* the *Naamathite*, upon the State and Condition of the Wicked: He takes his Riſe from the very Beginning; His Words, in our Tranſlation, are theſe: *Knoweſt thou not this of old, ſince Man was placed on the Earth, that the Triumphing of the Wicked is ſhort, and the Joy of the Hypocrite but for a Moment? Though his Excellency mount up to the Heavens, and his Head reach unto the Clouds: Yet he ſhall periſh for ever like his own Dung.* The firſt Verſe might

as well have been rendered, *Since* Adam *was placed on the Earth.* There is no Reaſon to doubt but that this Paſſage refers to the Fall, and the firſt Sin of Man: The Date agrees——For the Knowledge here taught is ſaid to ariſe from Facts as old as *the Firſt placing Man on Earth:* The ſudden Puniſhment of the Iniquity correſponds to the *Moſaic* Account—— *The Triumphing of the Wicked is ſhort, his Joy but for a Moment.* Above all, the Nature of the Crime, and of the Puniſhment here deſcribed, are ſtrong Preſumptions on this ſide: *Adam*'s Ambition was to *be like God*, and he had the Tempter's Word to aſſure him he ſhou'd be ſo: How aptly is this Ambition deſcribed in the Paſſage before us? *Though his Excellency mount up to the Heavens, and his Head reach unto the Clouds:* That is (as the *Syriac* and *Arabic* Verſions render the Verſe) "Though in his Pride he aſcend "up to Heaven yet ſhall he periſh for "ever." *Adam*'s Puniſhment was Death. *To Duſt thou ſhalt return.* The Puniſhment, as deſcribed in the Book of *Job* is—*He ſhall periſh for ever*; but how,

or in what manner? Why, *like his own Dung*; *i. e.* by returning to Earth again. That the *Chaldee Paraphraſt* underſtood this whole Paſſage to relate to the Fall, ſeems evident by his Expoſition of the fourth Verſe, where he takes Notice of the *Accuſer* or Tempter, as well as of the Offenders: *Gaudium impiorum finitur citò, & lætitia delatoris ad momentum.* What *Delator*, or Accuſer, do we read of at the Time of *Adam*'s being placed on the Earth, except the *Tempter?* To whom the Name of the *Adverſary*, or *Accuſer*, was afterwards appropriated; and it is the Character, in this very Book, of the Spirit permitted to plague and torment *Job*; which is one Evidence, by the by, that the *Paraphraſt* underſtood the ſame Perſon to have been concerned in both Caſes; in the tempting of *Adam*, and in the tormenting of *Job*. Our own Verſion, the *Vulgate* and *Montanus*'s agree in one Senſe; *The Joy of the* HYPOCRITE *is but for a Moment*: But who is this *Hypocrite*, appearing at the very firſt placing of Man on Earth? It was neither *Eve* nor *Adam*; they were bold and

and hardly, and diſtruſtful of God, but ſhewed no *Guile* or *Hypocriſy* in the whole Tranſaction. But the Tempter's Part was all *Hypocriſy*; he ſhewed great Concern for the Proſperity of thoſe, whom he meant to deſtroy, and well deſerves *this Character*; and the *Chaldee Paraphraſt* has Reaſon in fixing it upon him.

The next Paſſage that occurs, is but a bare Alluſion to one Circumſtance in the Hiſtory of the Fall, and that not a very material one. In the xxxi. Chapter *Job* vindicates his Integrity in many Particulars; one is, that he was ever ready to acknowledge his Errors. Upon which Occaſion his Words are —— *If I covered my Tranſgreſſions as* Adam, *by hiding my Iniquity in my Boſom.* —— The marginal reading of our Bible is —— *After the Manner of Men.* Other Verſions give the ſame Senſe. But the *Chaldee Paraphraſe* agrees with our Tranſlation. The Alluſion to *Adam's hiding himſelf* is proper and appoſite; but if you read, *after the Manner of Men*, the Paſſage is an Accuſation of others, and the Vindication of himſelf has a Mixture of Pride

in it, which does not ſuit the Character of the ſpeaker.

In the xii. Chapter *Job* magnifies the Power of God in making and diſpoſing all things: At ℣. 16. we have theſe remarkable Words: *With him is Strength and Wiſdom, the Deceived and the Deceiver are his.* If nothing more is meant by this, than that the *cunning Man*, as well as the *weak Man*, is under the Power of God, 'tis an Obſervation that needed not to have been prefaced with an expreſs Declaration of God's *great Wiſdom and Power*; nor ſhould it be placed, as it is, among the greateſt Works of Providence; the Creation of the World; the deſtroying it by a Flood; the ſettling and enlarging the Nations of the Earth, and ſtraitning them again: In the midſt of theſe great Accounts of Providence ſtands this Obſervation, *the Deceived and the Deceiver are his.* This therefore muſt be ſomething, relating to the general Condition of Mankind; and muſt be underſtood to be an Inſtance of God's Providence, in the great Affairs of the World. And for this Reaſon 'tis very

probable

probable, that the Words were meant of the Fall of Man through the cunning of the Tempter. It was directly to the Purpose of the Book of *Job* to assert and maintain the Superiority of God over the *Deceiver*, who, by this very Means of bringing Evil into the World, had grown up, in the Opinion of many, into a Rival of the Power and Majesty of God.

There is anothe Passage, in this Book of *Job*, very like to the Former; which, considered and compared with it, will leave little room to doubt of its true Meaning. The Passage I mean, is in Chap. xxvi. They are the Words of *Job*: *By his Spirit he* (God) *hath garnished the Heavens*; *his Hand hath formed the crooked Serpent*. How come these disagreeable Ideas to be joined together? How comes the forming of *a crooked Serpent* to be mentioned, as an Instance of Almighty Power, and to be set, as it were, upon an equal Foot with the Creation of the Heavens, and all the Host of them? Read the whole Chapter; all the Images there of divine Power are great and magnificent: *Hell* (we are told) *is naked before God*,

and Deſtruction hath no covering; He ſtretcheth out the North over the empty Place, and hangeth the Earth upon nothing. He bindeth up the Waters in his thick Clouds, and the Cloud is not rent under them — He hath compaſſed the Waters with Bounds, until the Day and Night come to an end. The Pillars of Heaven tremble, and are aſtoniſhed at his Reproof. He divideth the Sea with his Power, and by his Underſtanding he ſmiteth thro' the Proud: By his Spirit the Heavens are garniſhed; his Hand formed the crooked Serpent. Can you poſſibly imagine that the *forming the crooked Serpent*, in this Place, means no more, than that God created *Snakes* and *Adders?* This ſurely cannot be the Caſe!

If we conſider the State of Religion in the World, when this Book was penned, it will help to clear this Matter up. The oldeſt Notion, in Oppoſition to the Supremacy of the Creator, is that of two independent Principles, as has been already obſerved: And the only kind of Idolatry mentioned in the Book of *Job* (and it was of all others the antienteſt) is the

Worſhip

Worſhip of the Sun and Moon, and heavenly Hoſt; from this *Job* vindicates himſelf, *Chap.* xxxi. *If I beheld the Sun when it ſhined, or the Moon walking in brightneſs: And my Heart hath been ſecretly enticed, or my Mouth hath kiſſed my Hand: This alſo were an Iniquity to be puniſhed by the Judge: For I SHOU'D have denied the God that is above.* Suppoſe now *Job* to be acquainted with the Fall of Man, and the Part aſcribed to the *Serpent* in the Introduction of Evil, and ſee how aptly the Parts do cohere. In Oppoſition to the Idolatrous Practice of his Time, he aſſerts God to be the Maker of all the Hoſt of Heaven —— *By his Spirit hath he garniſhed the Heavens:* In Oppoſition to the falſe Notion of two independent Principles, he aſſerts God to be Maker of him, who was the firſt Author of Evil: *His Hand hath formed the crooked Serpent.* You ſee how properly the *Garniſhing* of the *Heavens*, and the *Forming* of the *Serpent*, are joined together.

That this was the antient traditionary Explication of this Place, we have unde-

niable Evidence from the Tranſlation of the Seventy; who render the latter Part of this Verſe, which relates to the *Serpent*, in this manner, προσάγματι ὃ ἐθανάτωσε δράκοντα ἀποστάτην. *By a Decree he deſtroyed the apoſtate Dragon:* The *Syriac* and *Arabic* Verſions are to the ſame Senſe. Theſe Tranſlators applied the Place to the Puniſhment inflicted on the *Serpent*; and it comes to the ſame Thing; for the puniſhing the Serpent, is as clear an Evidence of God's Power over the Author of Evil, as the creating him.

The old Commentator upon *Job*, printed among the Works of St. *Jerom*, tho' he chiefly purſues a myſtical Senſe, yet has left us a plain intimation how he underſtood theſe Words — *Educitur ab eis (i. e. ab animabus Sanctis) & de cordibus earum excluditur ille, in quo nihil eſt rectum,* COLUBER TORTUOSUS.

We need not wonder to ſee ſo much concern in this Book of *Job*, to maintain the Supremacy of God, and to guard it againſt every falſe Notion; for this was the Theme, the Buſineſs of the Author. He gives, as it were, an Epitome of his

Deſign

Deſign, in theſe remarkable Words delivered by *Job*. *God is wiſe in Heart, and mighty in Strength: Who hath hardned himſelf againſt him, and hath proſpered?* ix. 4.

The mention of the *Serpent*, in this manner, in the Book of *Job*, is the more to be regarded, becauſe, this Book being, as I conceive, older than the *Moſaic Hiſtory*, it is an evident Proof that the Account of *Moſes* is the antient Account of the Fall; and not a Story dreſſed up by himſelf, to ſerve any particular Ends or Purpoſes.

But let us proceed to conſider, what Notions this Writer had of the Conſequences of the Fall, and of the State of the World after it. The general Corruption of the World has been obſerved in all Times, and 'tis not worth the while to be particular in proving, that this antient Writer had the ſame Senſe, which others had of the Condition of Mankind. He mentions the Flood; *the overturning the Earth by Waters*, as he ſtyles it; but this too is an unconteſted Piece of Hiſtory. One Obſervation he has, which

deſerves our Regard, That all the Works of Nature are prepared by God to be his Inſtruments, either for Judgment, or for Mercy: Of the *Clouds*, he ſays, they are made, *to do whatſoever he commandeth them upon the Face of the World in the Earth. He cauſeth it to come, whether for Correction, or for his Land, or for Mercy*, xxxvii. 12, 13. *The Treaſures of Snow and Hail are reſerved againſt the Time of Trouble, againſt the Day of Battle and War*, xxviii. 23. It ſeems not improbable to me, that theſe Reflexions aroſe from the Methods made uſe of by Providence (not worn out of Memory in this Writer's Time) in puniſhing the old World, in Conſequence of the Curſe laid upon the Ground. Such Methods they are, by which the Ground may, at any time, be curſed, and the Toil and Labour of Men increaſed, to what degree God thinks fit. And 'tis to be noted, that the Bleſſing promiſed to *Noah*, upon the Reſtoration of the Earth, is expreſſed by the regular Succeſſions that ſhould continue, from that time, of *Seed-time and Harveſt, Cold*

and

and Heat, Summer and Winter; which is but a Promiſe, in other Words, that the *Hail* and *Snow*, and the *Waters of Heaven*, ſhou'd be no longer Inſtruments of Judgment, but of Mercy. In the xxxviii^th^ Chapter, God is introduced, ſetting forth his own great Works of Wiſdom and Power; he *laid the Foundations of the Earth*; *he ſhut up the Sea with Doors*; *he commanded the Morning and the Day-ſpring*: After which it follows; *From the Wicked their Light is withholden.* This Paſſage might be thought to allude to the *Egyptian Darkneſs*, did it not refer to a much older Date, and ſtand among the earlieſt of God's Works, as an Inſtance of his Power from the Beginning. The ſame Reflexion occurs in this Writer more than once, it is mentioned again, Chap. ix. and number'd among the Judgments of God: *He commandeth the Sun, and it riſeth not*; *and ſealeth up the Stars.* Again, Chap. xxxvi. after mention of the *Clouds*, and of *Light*, it follows, *By them judgeth he the People.* To what antient Piece of Hiſtory do all theſe Alluſions refer? We have nothing remaining upon Record,

Record, to which the Application may be made. This only I find, that when God reſtored the Earth, and gave his Bleſſing to *Noah*, one Promiſe is, *That Day and Night ſhall not ceaſe:* A ſtrong Intimation that Clouds and Darkneſs, Storms and Tempeſts had greatly prevailed before, for the Puniſhment of the old World. Theſe Expreſſions, you'll ſay perhaps, were uſed in the *Eaſtern* Countries metaphorically: 'Tis true, I find them ſo uſed in this very Book of *Job*, Ch. xxii. 11. But what was the Foundation of the Metaphor? Metaphors do not ariſe out of nothing; and there was ſome reaſon why *ſealing up of Stars*, *and darkning the Sun*, were Expreſſions made uſe of to denote a State of Sorrow and Diſtreſs. *Job*'s Affliction is deſcribed by one of his Friends, in this manner; *Sudden Fear troubleth thee; or Darkneſs that thou canſt not ſee; and abundance of Waters cover thee.* The firſt Expreſſion is plain; the ſecond and third are metaphorical. Why the Judgments of God are repreſented by the overwhelming of Waters, every Man may underſtand who knows the Hiſtory of the Flood.

Flood. But how will you account for the ſecond Metaphor? Or why is he ſaid to *be without the Sun*, who ſuffers under Trouble or Affliction in this Life? In this manner *Job* himſelf complains: *The Days of Affliction prevented me, I went mourning without the Sun*, xxx. 28. The ſame Figure is applied in like manner by the Prophet *Amos* — *Seek him* — *that turneth the Shadow of Death into the Morning, and maketh the Day dark with Night*, Amos v. 8. And again, *I will cauſe the Sun to go down at Noon, and I will darken the Earth in the clear Day, and I will turn your Feaſts into Mourning, and all your Songs into Lamentation*, viii. 9. So the Prophet *Joel*; *The Day of the Lord cometh* — *a Day of Darkneſs and of Gloomineſs* — *The Sun and the Moon ſhall be dark, and the Stars ſhall withdraw their Shining*, Joel ii. 1, 2, 10. And the Prophet *Iſaiah*; *The Stars of Heaven and the Conſtellations thereof ſhall not give their Light; the Sun ſhall be darkened in his going forth, and the Moon ſhall not cauſe her Light to ſhine. And I will puniſh the World for their*

Evils,

Evils, and the Wicked for their Iniquity, Iſa. xiii. 10, 11. But this is not a very material Point, and therefore I need not enlarge on it.

As to the Origin of the general Corruption and Depravity of Mankind, this antient Author ſeems to ſuppoſe, that all Men are corrupt by Deſcent and Inheritance: *What is Man that he ſhould be clean? and he which is born of a Woman that he ſhould be righteous?* Job xv, 14. The ſame Queſtion is asked again, *Job* xxv. 4. In both theſe Places there may be ſome Reaſon perhaps to think, that *Uncleanneſs* is charg'd upon Man *comparatively* only, and with reſpect to the tranſcendent Purity of God; which is a very different thing from the *Uncleanneſs* derived from the Fall. But there is another Paſſage which will not admit of this Conſtruction: In Chapter xiv. *Job* repreſents the miſerable Condition of Man; *Man that is born of a Woman, is of few Days and full of Trouble; He cometh forth like a Flower and is cut down; he fleeth alſo as a Shadow, and continueth not.* Upon this Repreſentation

on he expoſtulates his Caſe with God; *Doſt thou open thine Eyes upon ſuch an one, and bringeſt me into Judgment with thee? Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?* Theſe laſt Words plainly refer to the firſt; and ſhew the Ground of the other Expoſtulations; *What is Man, that he ſhould be clean? and he that is born of a Woman that he ſhould be righteous?* For in this xiv^th^ Chapter the Queſtion is not, whether a Man is pure compared to God, but whether he has Purity enough left, in his preſent State, to make him a fit Object of Judgment. This ſeems to be the Senſe of *Job's Expoſtulation*; "Why art thou extreme to "mark all my Errors; is it reaſonable to "expect Purity of a Man born of a Wo-"man, who is by the very Condition of "his Birth unclean?" I ſhall be eaſily perſuaded that *Job* had not entered into all the Niceties relating to this Point, but I ſhall not eaſily believe, that he charged God fooliſhly, by imputing Uncleanneſs to the Works of his Creation. For tell me upon what Ground this Expoſtulation ſtands, *How ſhall Man be clean that is born*

born of a Woman? Why not clean? Did *God* make *Woman* or Man, *unclean* at the Beginning? If he did, the Expoſtulation would have been more appoſite, and much ſtronger, had the true Cauſe been aſſigned, and *Job* had ſaid "How canſt thou ex-"pect Cleanneſs in Man, whom thou "createdſt unclean?" But as the Caſe now ſtands, the Expoſtulation has a plain Reference to the Introduction of *Vanity* and *Corruption*, by the *Sin* of the *Woman*; and is an evidence, that this antient Writer was ſenſible of the evil Conſequences of the Fall upon the whole Race of Man. *Moſes* tells us *Adam begat a Son in his own Likeneſs, after his Image*; and St. *Paul, That we have born the Image of the earthy*; the Notion is the ſame as expreſſed by *Job, Can a clean thing come out of an unclean?*

There is ſtill a very material Queſtion behind; namely, what Hope or Expectation had this antient Writer of a Deliverance from the Evil and Corruption, which prevailed over the whole Race of Man?

In anſwer to this Queſtion, I obſerve in the firſt Place; that the Argument of

this

this whole Book ſuppoſes a Man to be *accountable* to his Maker for the Good or Evil of his Actions. This Point is not diſputed between *Job* and his Friends; they differ widely ſometimes in their Notions of God's Method of Juſtice towards Men, but 'tis an allowed Principle on all Sides, that God is Man's Judge, as well as his Maker. 2. That the Wicked often proſper in this World, and go down in Peace to the Grave, is a Propoſition maintained by *Job* in many Places; but particularly and fully in Chap. xxi. Let us ſee then whether his Concluſion be agreeable to theſe Premiſſes.

In the xiv^th^ Chapter, *Job* pleads his Cauſe with God, reminding him of the infirm State and Condition of Man: *He cometh up as a Flower, and is cut down. — He giveth up the Ghoſt, and where is he? — He lieth down, and riſeth not till the Heavens be no more.* The Queſtion here asked, *Where is he?* May import that *Job* did not ſuppoſe Death to be the final Deſtruction of Man. A like Paſſage we find, Chap. xiv. *I have ſaid to Corruption, thou art my Father; to the Worm,*

thou art my Mother and my Sister. And where is now my Hope? As for my Hope who shall see it? Not the Men of this Generation, for *they shall go down to the Bars of the Pit, when our Rest together is in the Dust.* But such Questions do sometimes amount to Negatives. Where is he? No where. What is my Hope? Nothing. Their determinate Sense therefore must be collected from the Context. — When a Man gives up the Ghost, *where is he?* The Meaning of which Question is explained in the following Words, for *Man lieth down, and riseth not till the Heavens be no more.* Where is he then, or what is he in the intermediate Space? You may reply perhaps, that this Expression, *'till the Heavens be no more*, may very well signify, that Man shall never rise more; and to shew the contrary, it ought at least to be proved, that *Job* had a Notion that the Heavens should one Day be destroyed, and that new Heavens and a new Earth should succeed. But if this Expression be doubtful in it self, yet 'tis reasonable to expound it to the Sense, which antient Tradition

dition beſt ſupports. And this we certainly know from Writers both ſacred and prophane, that it was a very old Opinion, that the preſent Frame of Nature ſhould be one Day diſſolved, and be ſucceeded by a Renovation of all things, by new Heavens and a new Earth. And therefore *Vatablus*, a very learned and judicious Commentator, makes no Doubt of referring this Paſſage to *Job*'s Expectation of a *Reſurrection* in the Day of God's Viſitation. This Expoſition is ſupported by another famous Paſſage, made familiar to us, by being a part of our burial Office, *I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he ſhall ſtand at the latter Day upon the Earth; and though after my Skin, worms deſtroy this Body, yet in my Fleſh ſhall I ſee God: whom I ſhall ſee for my ſelf, and mine Eyes ſhall behold and not another, though my Reins be conſumed within me*, xix. 25, &c. Many worthy and learned Men have underſtood this Place of a temporal Deliverance, expected by *Job*: The late pious and worthy Biſhop of *Ely*, Dr. *Patrick*, particularly, has followed this Senſe *in his Paraphraſe*

on the Book of Job. What he ſays upon the 26th Verſe, will ſhew his Meaning perfectly, and therefore I need tranſcribe no more: His Paraphraſe is this; *And though the Worms, which have eaten my Skin, ſhould proceed to conſume the reſt of this wretched Body; yet I feel my Soul inſpired with a comfortable Belief, that before I die I ſhall ſee my ſelf reſtored, by the Mercy of God, to a happy Eſtate.* *Job*'s Condition indeed was ſuch, that the Deſcription in the Text, *(though after my Skin, Worms deſtroy this Body)* will ſuit his Caſe exactly, and we cannot neceſſarily collect, from the Expreſſion only, that he thought of the Corruption of the Grave: The other Expreſſion *(In my Fleſh ſhall I ſee God)* may likewiſe ſignify *his ſeeing God* before he put off his Fleſh, *i. e.* before he died. And there is ſtill another Reaſon, which has often weighed with me on the Side of this Expoſition, which is this; That if we expound this Paſſage in *Job* of a *future Reſurrection*, it contains a Degree of Knowledge in this great Myſtery, beyond the Proportion of Light communicated to the

Age

Age in which he lived. *Moſes* has no ſuch expreſs Promiſe or Prophecy, nor is there any Evidence that the *Jewiſh* Church for many Ages had ſuch Knowledge. 'Tis the peculiar Character of our Saviour, *That he brought Life and Immortality to Light through the Goſpel*; and yet what do we know from the Goſpel, more than is contained in this Paſſage, if it is indeed a Deſcription of a *future Reſurrection*, to be brought to Light by a Redeemer, *who ſhall ſtand upon the Earth at the latter Day?* Theſe Reaſons, I imagine, inclined the *Jewiſh* Interpreters to confine the Senſe of this Paſſage to a temporal Deliverance only. For ſhould they admit a future Reſurrection to be here intended, how would it conſiſt with the Preference they give to themſelves, above all other Nations, in the Knowledge of Religion? Can they eaſily be perſuaded, do you think, that *Job*, who was *an Alien from the Commonwealth of* Iſrael, had a clearer and more diſtinct Knowledge of this great Myſtery, than God thought fit to reveal to the *Jewiſh* Church? Beſides, this Deſcription in the Book of *Job*, admitting

mitting that it relates *at all* to a future Reſurrection, is ſo conſonant to the Doctrine of the Goſpel, and is indeed ſo ſtrong a *Prophecy* of the Office and Character of *Chriſt Jeſus*, that 'tis no more to be expected of a *Jew*, that he ſhould ſee and acknowledge *this Senſe* of the Paſſage, than that he ſhould ſubſcribe to the Interpretation of other antient Prophecies, in the Senſe, in which they are applyed in the new Teſtament. 'Tis ſtrange to me to obſerve what Streſs the very learned *Grotius* lays upon the Conſent of the *Jewiſh* Interpreters in this Caſe: *they are*, ſays he, *inquiſitive after every thing, that may with any Appearence be applyed to the Reſurrection; but this Paſſage of* Job *they never ſo apply.* And Reaſon good; the *Jews* without Doubt would be glad to find in their own Law, whatever appears to them to be excellent in the Goſpel, that they may ſhew the little Need there was for the Goſpel Revelation. But would they be equally glad to find clearer Knowledge of divine Truth among the antient *Arabians*, than among the Deſcendents of *Abraham*? Or to ſee a

plain prophetical Deſcription of the *grand Article* of the *Goſpel*, even before the giving of their own Law?

The ſame learned Perſon has another Objection againſt thoſe, who interpret *this Paſſage* of a Reſurrection. He thinks, with others to whom he refers, that they all depart from the *original Hebrew: (coacti ſunt in verſionibus ſuis multum ab Hebræo diſcedere)*. 'Tis happy, that this learned Hand has given us, what he judges to be, the true Senſe of the Paſſage; for it ſhews that no juſt Interpretation or Tranſlation can be given of theſe Words, which will exclude the Notion of a Reſurrection. *Grotius* his own Senſe expreſſed according to the *Original*, is ſo far from ſhutting out this Notion, that it can hardly be made to agree with any thing elſe *. For what do thoſe Words mean, *Mine Eye ſhall behold and not another, (hiſce*

* Hebræa ſic ſonant: *Scio ego Redemptorem meum vivere, & illum poſtremo ſtaturum in campo. Etiamſi non pellem tantùm meam, ſed & hoc* (nempe arvinam quæ ſub pelle eſt) *conſumerent* (morbi ſcilicet) *in carne tamen mea Deum videbo* (*i. e.* propitium experiar). Ego, inquam, hiſce meis oculis: Ego, non autem alius pro me. —— Deus *Redemptor* dicitur, quia pios ex multis malis liberat.

(hiſce oculis meis: ego, non autem alius pro me). If *Job*'s Thought was that he ſhould be reſtored to his former Health and Proſperity in this Life, why does he guard againſt the Suſpicion that it might be *another*, and not *himſelf* who ſhould be reſtored? Had he ever ſeen a Tranſmutation of *Perſons* in this World, or heard of any Man who ceaſed to be *himſelf*, and became *another*? Diſeaſes may waſte the Body, and often do, to a great Degree; but we never are afraid that they will deſtroy the *Perſon*, or change the Man. What is it then that *Job* guards againſt? If you apply *this Paſſage* to the Reſurrection, this Circumſtance, *that he himſelf, and not another for him ſhould ſee God*, is the moſt expreſſive of his Hope. Death, to all Appearence, deſtroys the Perſon, the whole Man; and though poſſibly there may be a Renovation of the World, yet ſtill 'tis difficult to conceive

liberat. *Pſ.* lxxviii. 35. *Eſa.* xli. 14. xlii. 14. xliv. 6. xlvii. 4. *Poſtremum in campo ſtare* eſt victoris, ſic Deum dicit victorem fore adverſariorum ſuorum. Neq; verò ei eſſe impoſſibile corpus ejus putredine propè exeſum reſtituere in priorem formam; quod & fecit Deus. *Grotius in Locum.*

how

how individual Perſons ſhall be ſo preſerved, through all the Changes of many Ages, as at the laſt Day to find themſelves to be *themſelves* again.

But further; the Words in the Original which we render, *he ſhall ſtand at the latter Day upon the Earth*, are in *Grotius*'s Tranſlation thus expreſſed, *illum poſtremo ſtaturum in campo*; by which he means, *he ſhall keep the Field, (quod victoris eſt) which is a Mark of Conqueſt.* Allow this, and what do they ſuffer, who apply this Paſſage to the Reſurrection? The reſtoring Life to the World is repreſented as the greateſt *Victory* and *Triumph*; St. *Paul* ſays, *Chriſt muſt reign till he hath put all Enemies under his Feet*; *the laſt Enemy that ſhall be deſtroyed is Death.* The Expreſſion therefore, as expounded by *Grotius*, has nothing inconſiſtent with an Application of the whole Paſſage to the Reſurrection.

But the original Word *Haphar* is never uſed, that I can find, to ſignify *a Field*; much *leſs a Field of Battle*; and I very much queſtion whether *keeping the Field* was an Expreſſion of *Victory*,

of so old a Date as the Book of *Job*. It seems to me to belong to the Times when War was become more an *Art*, than it was in the Times of *Job*: Conquerors then did not use to *keep the Field*; and why shou'd they, when one Battle commonly decided the Point, and the Conquered had nothing to do but to fly, and the Conqueror to pursue? And *even now*, *keeping the Field* is the *lowest* Idea of Victory, and signifies little more than not being routed: And was this a fit Image to represent the *all victorious* Power of the *Almighty*? Does it not convey to the Mind the Notion of a great *Struggle* for Victory, of great *Difficulties* in obtaining the Conquest? And is such a Notion agreeable to the Book of *Job*, which seems to be written on purpose to shew that God has no *Rival* in Power?

But there is a Circumstance belonging to *this Passage*, and which ought to be considered with it, to which *Grotius* has said nothing, and which can hardly be reconciled with the Opinion, that *Job* expected *no more* than a *temporal* Deliverance. The Case is this: *Job* being tired with

with the Oppoſition of his Friends, and the perverſe Conſtruction they made of his Misfortunes, as if he muſt needs be as *wicked* as he was *miſerable*, appeals from them to another Judgment. *Oh*, ſays he, *that my Words were now written! Oh that they were printed in a Book! That they were graven with an Iron Pen and Lead, in the Rock for ever! For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he ſhall ſtand at the latter Day upon the Earth.* You ſee how ſtrongly *Job* inſiſts upon his Plea; though Men would not receive it, yet he wiſhes it were *graven in the Rock for ever*; that it might remain till the Time, in which God would come to judge his Cauſe, *For I know*, ſays he, *that my Redeemer liveth.* Suppoſe *Job* to expect a future Time of Judgment, the whole Paſſage is exceeding beautiful and proper. "I find, ſays "he, that my Complaint is diſregarded "here, that *Man* has no *Compaſſion* for me, "and that *God* in his unſearchable Wiſ-"dom *ſuffers* the *Innocent*, as well as "the *Guilty*, to be *unfortunate* in this "Life: But the Time will come when

"my

" my Plea ſhall be heard, and ſo ſatisfy'd
" am I in the Righteouſneſs of it, that I
" would have it remain as my Monu-
" ment for ever, *graven in the Rock*;
" for though I my ſelf ſhall ſoon be gone
" yet my Redeemer lives, and will at
" the laſt Day call me from the Grave,
" and with *my own Eyes* ſhall I ſee God
" my Saviour: " But if you ſuppoſe *Job* to expect only a *temporal* Reſtitution, within the Compaſs of his own Life, to what End or Purpoſe does he ſo paſſionately wiſh to have his Complaints rendered Immortal? What Senſe is there in ſaying; " *Oh* that my Complaint which
" you deſpiſe may *never* be *forgotten*,
" for I know that within a *little Time*
" I ſhall be reſtored by God to all my
" Glory and former Felicity, and ſhall
" have no Cauſe to complain any more". In one View, the Images are lively, paſſionate, and the Sentiments juſt and proper; in the other, there is neither Force, nor Vigour, nor Propriety; nor indeed, hardly any Senſe.

As to the Degree of Light and Knowledge contained in *this Paſſage*, and which

ſeems

ſeems diſproportionate to the Age of *Job*, there is this to be ſaid: There might poſſibly be among the few Faithful in the World, a traditionary Expoſition of the Promiſes of God, grounded upon more expreſs Revelations, made either before or ſoon after the Flood, than have come down to our Times; or, as *Job* was tryed in a very extraordinary Manner, he might have as extraordinary a Degree of Light to ſupport and maintain him in the Conflict. There is nothing in either of theſe Suppoſitions, but what is conformable to the Methods of divine Providence; nothing that intrenches upon our bleſſed Lord's Office, who was appointed *to bring Life and Immortality to Light through the Goſpel.* 'Tis by *Chriſt*, and by him *alone*, that we have God's *Covenant* of *Immortality* conveyed to us, but yet the antient Prophets had a Sight of the Bleſſing at a Diſtance, as is evident from many of their Predictions †. And why might not *Job* be ſo honoured, as well as others who lived before the Days of our *Saviour?*

† See Dr. *Clark*'s Diſcourſe concerning the Connexion of the Prophets, *&c. Page* 12, 13.

But

But ſtill there is ſomething that ſeems very unaccountable in this Matter; for if *Job*'s Friends allowed and believed this great Truth of a future Reſurrection, how is it, that they continue to preſs their Argument, and to inſiſt that he was undoubtedly *wicked*, becauſe *miſerable*? How is it, that they do not reply to this Argument, and ſhew the reaſoning to be falſe, if they apprehended it to be ſo? Or, if this Knowledge was *peculiar* to *Job*, how is it, that they are not ſurprized at ſuch *new*, ſuch *ſtrange* Doctrine? And yet no ſuch Marks have been obſerved (as far as I have ſeen) by any Interpreters. The Book of *Job* is in the Nature of a *Drama*, in which ſeveral Perſons appear diſcourſing one with another; and how could ſuch a material Aſſertion *as this* paſs unobſerved by all the Speakers? One would imagine, from ſuch Conduct, that *Job*'s Friends underſtood him to ſpeak only of his Hope in this Life, which they might entertain as a vain Deluſion, and deſerving of no Regard.

But I am perſuaded the Caſe will appear otherwiſe upon a ſtrict Examination; and

and that the Circumſtances relating to *this Paſſage*, duly obſerved, will caſt a great Light upon it, and be a Means to open to us the true and genuine Meaning of it.

The Argument between *Job* and his Friends turns upon this Point, whether the Afflictions of this World are certain Marks of God's Diſpleaſure, and an Indication of the Wickedneſs of thoſe who ſuffer. *Job*'s Friends maintain the Affirmative; and in Conſequence of it, charge *Job* with great Iniquity, for no other Reaſon, but becauſe they ſaw him greatly miſerable. This they thought was doing Honour to the Juſtice of God; but *Job* calls it *ſpeaking wickedly for God, and talking deceitfully for him*; *and accepting the Perſon* of God, Chap. xiii. as corrupt Judges accept the Perſons of great Men, when they give Sentence partially in their Favour. As to himſelf, he reſolutely maintained his Innocence, but ſtill he depended upon the Juſtice and Goodneſs of God, notwithſtanding his preſent Diſtreſs. His Character cannot be better deſcribed than in his own Words, *Though he ſlay me, yet will*

will I truſt in him: But I will maintain mine own Ways before him, Chap. xiii. ℣. 15. 'Tis plain from hence, that *Job*'s Friends confined the Exerciſe of God's Juſtice within the Scene of this World, and looked no further; but *He*, vexed with continued Reproaches, applies himſelf to God in certain Expectation of another time for Juſtice, *Oh that thou wouldeſt hide me in the Grave, that thou wouldeſt keep me ſecret until thy Wrath be paſt, that thou wouldeſt appoint me a ſet Time and remember me!* Chap. xiv. ℣. 13. What Time was it, do you imagine, that *Job* deſired to be appointed for him? Was it the Time of this Life? If ſo, how could it ſucceed his *being hid in the Grave?* No; he had other Hopes, and expected to be called from the Grave, and ſeems aſſured that God would not deſert his Creatures even there; *Thou ſhalt call and I will anſwer thee: Thou wilt have a deſire to the Work of thine Hands*, ℣. 15. He had before declared his Notion, *That Man lieth down and riſeth not till the Heavens be no more*, ℣. 12. And preſently he declares, that all Things were

were drawing to an end, the Earth and the Inhabitants thereof; *Surely the Mountain falling cometh to nought, and the Rock is removed out of his Place. The Waters wear the Stones: Thou waſheſt away the things which grow out of the Duſt of the Earth, and thou deſtroyeſt the Hope of Man. Thou prevaileſt for ever againſt him, and he paſſeth:* ℣. 18, 19, 20. Thus far *Job*. Let us ſee now how this new Argument is entertained by his Friends: The firſt who replies is *Eliphaz the Temanite*; he appears quite aſtoniſhed, and asks *Job* where he had *this Knowledge*, whether he had the *Secret of God*, and had engroſſed all Wiſdom to *himſelf*; he tells him, *they* were no Strangers to the Ways of God, but had heard as much from their Fathers as *Job* had, tho' he pretended to the Knowledge of *ſuch ſecret* Things. But take his own Words; *Art thou the firſt Man that was born? Or waſt thou made before the Hills? Haſt thou heard the Secret of God? And doſt thou reſtrain Wiſdom to thy ſelf? What knoweſt thou that we know not? What underſtandeſt thou, which is not*

in us? With us are both the grey headed, and very aged Men, much elder than thy Father. Are the Conſolations of God (which we have inſtructed thee in) *ſmall with thee? Is there any ſecret Thing with thee?* Chap. xv. ℣. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. After this ſtrong Expoſtulation, he returns to his old Argument, and offers many Proofs, from antient Tradition, of God's immediate Vengeance upon the Wicked. The next who anſwers *Job* is *Bildad the Shuhite:* He talks in the ſame Strain, and reproaches *Job* with his Pretence to ſecret Knowledge above others —— *Wherefore*, ſays he, *are we counted as Beaſts, and reputed vile in your Sight?* Chap. xviii. ℣. 3. And becauſe *Job* had talked, as if the *Heavens* ſhou'd *ceaſe to be*, and that the *Earth*, and its *Inhabitants* ſhou'd *fail*, and the *Rock be removed out of his Place*, *Bildad* thinks him e'en diſtracted with Paſſion, and reproaches him with his wild Conceit; *He teareth himſelf in his Anger: Shall the Earth be forſaken for thee? and ſhall the Rock be removed out*

of

of his Place? * Chap. xviii. ℣. 4. As if he had ſaid, "What is this wonderful "Man, that he expects to ſee all Things "deſtroyed, the Earth and the Heavens "to paſs away, that there may be a pro-"per Time to do him Juſtice? Is it not "more reaſonable to think that God "will do Juſtice here, than that all the "Works of Nature ſhou'd be deſtroyed "to make Way for Judgment? *Yea, "the Light of the Wicked ſhall be put "out, and the Spark of his Fire ſhall "not ſhine*, ℣. 5.

Theſe repeated Provocations drew from *Job* that noble Declaration of his Faith and Hope, which is the Subject of our preſent Enquiry. In the next Chapter, he gently rebukes his Friends for their ſevere Reproaches for his ſuppoſed Error, *and be it indeed that I have erred, mine Error remaineth with my ſelf*, Chap. xix. ℣. 4. It affects not you, Why then are ye ſo enraged? He goes on, to

* Τί γὰρ, ἐὰν οὐ ἀποθάνῃς, δοκεῖ ὁ ὑπ' οὐρανὸν; *What, if you die, muſt the Earth under the Heavens be uninhabitable?* LXX.

acknowledge in the firſt Place, that all his Miſery was from the Hand of God; and that he cried in vain, being not regarded by God, or by Man; *I cry aloud, but there is no Judgment*, ℣. 7. But then, ſo far was he from being aſhamed of the *Error* imputed to him, that he appeals again with great Solemnity to the future Judgment of God —— *Oh that my Words were now written: Oh that they were printed in a Book! That they were graven with an Iron Pen, and Lead in the Rock for ever! For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he ſhall ſtand at the latter Day upon the Earth: And tho' after my Skin Worms deſtroy this Body, yet in my Fleſh ſhall I ſee God; whom I ſhall ſee for my ſelf, and mine Eyes ſhall behold, and not another.* *Job*'s Meaning in this ſolemn Appeal may be underſtood from another like Paſſage; *Alſo now, behold, my Witneſs is in Heaven, and my Record is on high. My Friends ſcorn me: But mine Eye poureth out Tears unto God*, Chap. xvi. ℣. 19, 20. From theſe Reaſons and Circumſtances laid together, it appears

pears to me evident, that *Job*'s Friends underſtood him to ſpeak of a Reſurrection to Judgment, and not of a temporal Deliverance; otherwiſe, What Occaſion was there to reproach him with pretending to be *wiſer* than *all Men*; to know the *Secret* of *God*, beyond what the *firſt Man* knew, or any who ſucceeded him? What Reaſon was there to charge him with an Opinion, that *the Earth ſhou'd be forſaken for his ſake?* His temporal Deliverance ſurely cou'd hurt neither the Earth nor its Inhabitants. Add to this, two other Charges brought againſt *Job*'s Opinion by *Eliphaz*, and not yet taken Notice of; he calls his Notion *unprofitable*, *Speeches that can do no good*, nay which are hurtful; *for*, ſays he, *thou caſteſt off Fear, and reſtraineſt Prayer before God*, Chap. xv. ℣. 4. His Thought was plainly this; if once *Job* can perſuade Men that God does not interpoſe to execute Judgment in this Life, but reſerves all Things to a diſtant, *far diſtant Day* of Viſitation, when the Heavens ſhall be no more, there will be an End of all *Fear* of *God*, an End of *all Prayer* and Suppli-

cation to him. * Taking it in this Light, we ſee how the Charge ariſes; but cou'd he poſſibly charge *Job*'s Hope of *temporal* Deliverance with ſuch Conſequences? If not, tis a great Evidence in what manner he underſtood *Job*; and, I think, we need no other Interpreter.

This very Paſſage is to me no inconſiderable Argument of the Reality of the Hiſtory contained in the Book of *Job*, and of the Antiquity of the Book itſelf: For ſuppoſing the Book to be a mere *poetical Fiction*, upon what Ground of Probability does the Author furniſh *Job* with ſuch exalted Sentiments of Religion, and, at the ſame Time ſuppoſe them to be ſuch *Secrets* to all his Friends? Is there any ſuch Inſtance in any Author? *Cicero*, in his Dialogues, introduces *Philoſophers* of different Opinions, but we find them all *acquainted* equally with the *common Notions* of their *own* Times; and it wou'd be abſurd in any Author, to ſuppoſe the Contrary, without very evident Reaſon; and there can be no ſuch Reaſon but the

* This Senſe of the Paſſage is confirmed by a like Reflexion in the Book of *Job*, Chap. xxi. from ℣. 7. to ℣. 1

Evidence

Evidence of *Hiſtory*. Conſequently the Book of *Job* muſt be founded in *Hiſtory*, and not in *Invention*. In the Time of *Job*, true Religion was preſerved among a few, and communicated by ſpecial Revelation; whether therefore *Job* had himſelf this Knowledge by Prophecy, or received it by Tradition in his own Houſe, from thoſe who had, he might very well know what his Friends and Neighbours knew not. This Circumſtance is natural, and agreeable to the Times, ſuppoſing the Hiſtory to be true; but 'tis unnatural, and without Probability, which is the very *Life* of *poetical Fiction*, ſuppoſing the Book to be a mere Fable or Parable.

I have been much longer, in examining theſe Paſſages in the Book of *Job*, than I intended; but this Book is ſo obſcure and hard to be underſtood, that I found it would be to little Purpoſe to produce the Paſſages, without endeavouring to fix the Meaning of them. And if I have not miſtaken in ſo doing, the Time has been not ill employ'd; for the Evidence ariſing from this Book is in all reſpects

conſiderable, and 'tis of great Moment to ſee thoſe great Strokes of true Religion, and of God's Purpoſe from the Beginning with reſpect to the Children of Men, preſerved in an Author who cannot be charged with *Jewiſh* Education or Prejudices; but who was born in another Country, of another Family, and does not appear to have heard of *Moſes*, or his Law, and yet *the Secret of God* was with him.

I will be very ſhort in what follows.

We may conſider the Books of *Pſalms*, the *Proverbs*, and *Eccleſiaſtes*, as the Productions of one and the ſame Age; and there is no Reaſon to think but that the Writers had the ſame Opinions in the ſubject Matters of our Enquiry. If we find leſs, than it may ſeem reaſonable to expect from theſe Writers, upon the Subject of the Fall, and the Promiſe made to *Adam*, there is a plain Reaſon to be given why it is ſo; for the great Promiſes made to *David* of a Son, *whoſe Kingdom ſhould endure for ever*, had eclipſed all the antient Hopes, and ſo entirely poſſeſſed the Mind of the *Pſalmiſt*, and of his Son

Solomon,

Solomon, that they ſeldom look higher than the immediate Promiſes of God to themſelves. But yet God's Method of opening gradually his Purpoſes to different Ages was underſtood by *Solomon*, who tells us, That *the Path of the Juſt is as the ſhining Light, that ſhineth more and more unto the perfect Day*, Prov. iv. 18. The Caſe was much the ſame with the ſucceeding Prophets; they were Miniſters of new Declarations made by God, and had no Occaſion to treat of the old. And of the later Writers, none treat expreſsly of this Subject; if ever they mention it, 'tis only occaſionally and *in tranſitu*. All the Help therefore to be had in this Caſe, muſt come from Hints and Alluſions and Ways of ſpeaking, which refer to antient Things, and ſhew the Writer's Senſe concerning them. Thus when *Solomon* tells us, *He applyed his Heart to know — the Reaſon of things, and to know the Wickedneſs of Folly, even of Fooliſhneſs and Madneſs*; and then declares the Reſult of all his Enquiry, *Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made Man upright, but they have ſought*

out many Inventions, Eccleſ. vii. 25, 29. When he tells us that *there is not a juſt Man upon the Earth, that doth good, and ſinneth not*, ℣. 20. Not one who can ſay *I have made my Heart clean, I am pure from my Sin*, Prov. xx. 9. When *David* tells us that he was *ſhapen in Iniquity*, that *in Sin did his Mother conceive* him, *Pſalm* li. 5. and that in the *Sight of God no Man ſhall be juſtified*, Pſalm cxliii. 2. When we read in the Book of *Wiſdom*, That *God made not Death, neither hath he Pleaſure in the Deſtruction of the living. For he created all things, that they might have their Being; and the Generations of the World were healthful: And there is no Poiſon of Deſtruction in them; nor the Kingdom of Death upon the Earth. For Righteouſneſs is immortal. But ungodly Men with their Works and Words called it to them*, Wiſdom i. 13, 14, 15, 16. And again, That *God created Man to be immortal, and made him to be an Image of his own Eternity. Nevertheleſs through Envy of the Devil came Death into the World; And they that do hold of his Side*

Side do find it, Wiſd. ii. 23, 24. When the Son of *Sirach* tells us, *That Error and Darkneſs had their Beginning together with Sinners*, Ecclus. xi. 16. That *Death is the Sentence of the Lord over all Fleſh*, Ecclus. xli. 3. That *the Covenant from the Beginning was, thou ſhalt die the Death*, Ecclus. xiv. 17. That, *of Woman came the Beginning of Sin, and through her we all die*, Ecclus. xxv. 24. That God, at the firſt, *filled Man with the Knowledge of Underſtanding, and ſhewed him Good and Evil.* Ecclus. xvii. 7. *And left him in the Hand of his* (own) *Counſel*, Ecclus. xv. 14. When, I ſay, we read and compare all theſe Paſſages together, can there be any reaſonable Foundation to doubt in what Senſe the antient *Jewiſh* Church underſtood the Hiſtory of the Fall, or what Conſequences they aſcribed to it?

When we find the *Wicked*, and the *Enemies* of *God* repreſented under the Image of *a Serpent*, Iſa. xiv. 29. xxvii. 1. Micah vii. 17. Of *Leviathan the crooked Serpent*; of a *Dragon*, Iſa. xxvii. 1. When we hear the Wretchedneſs of the *Idola-*

Idolater deſcribed by the Prophet in the following Terms, *He feedeth of Aſhes: A deceived Heart hath turned him aſide that he cannot deliver his Soul*, Iſa. xliv, 20. And when we hear *David* ſinging the Triumphs of *his Son*, to whom the everlaſting Kingdom was promiſed, in ſuch Strains as theſe, *His Name ſhall endure for ever: His Name ſhall be continued as long as the Sun: And Men ſhall be bleſſed in him; all Nations ſhall call him bleſſed*, Pſalm lxxii, 17. *His Enemies ſhall lick the Duſt*, ℣. 9. *He ſhall tread upon the Lion and Adder: The young Lion and the Dragon ſhall he trample under Feet*, Pſ. xci. 13. *He ſhall bruiſe his Enemies with a Rod of Iron*, Pſ. ii. 9. When we hear likewiſe the Prophet deſcribing the Kingdom, which he foretold, in like Figures, and repreſenting the State of the Wicked under that Kingdom, in theſe very Words, *and Duſt ſhall be the Serpents Meat*, Iſa. lxv. 25. Can we give any tolerable Account of theſe Things, but by ſuppoſing *David* to underſtand, that the *Son* promiſed to him, in whoſe Time *Righteouſneſs* and *Truth* were

were to be eſtabliſhed, was the very *Seed of the Woman*, who ſhould *bruiſe the Serpent's Head?* Could the Prophets underſtand their Predictions to belong to any other, when the Triumph of his Reign was to be a Victory over the *Serpent, whoſe Food ſhould then be Duſt?* Of the ſame Perſon *David* and the Prophets foretel, that he ſhould rule over all Nations, that *Men ſhould be bleſſed in him, that all Nations ſhould call him bleſſed*; which is the diſtinguiſhing Character of the *bleſſed Seed* promiſed to *Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob.* From all which 'tis evident, that the *Seed of the Woman*, who ſhou'd bruiſe the Serpent's Head; the *Seed* promiſed to *Abraham*, in whom all the Nations of the Earth ſhou'd be bleſſed; the *Son* promiſed to *David*, to ſit on his Throne for ever; and the *King*, who ſhould rule out of *Sion*, foretold by the Prophets, is ONE and the SAME Perſon: That the Purpoſe of God, in giving the *Word of Prophecy*, was the ſame in every Age; That *Chriſt* has, under different Degrees of Light, been ſet forth from the Beginning, as the

Hope

Hope of the World; That He it was, whoſe *Day* the faithful in every Age *deſired to ſee.* He it was, *who preſerved the firſt formed Father of the World, that was created alone, and brought him out of his Fall.* Wiſdom x. 1. He it is, who ſhall reign till *all Enemies are put under his Feet, till Death and Hell are caſt into the Lake of Fire.* Rev. xx. 14.

DISSERTATION III.

The Bleſſing of JUDAH, *Gen.* xlix.

WHEN *Jacob* drew near his End, he called his Sons together, and bleſſed them, *every one according to his Bleſſing*, *benedictionibus ſuis propriis*; *i. e.* giving to each a *peculiar* Bleſſing. The Part relating to *Judah* ſtands thus: Gen. xlix. 28. Vulg.

℣. 8. Judah, *thou art he whom thy Brethren ſhall praiſe; thy Hand ſhall be in the Neck of thine Enemies: Thy Father's Children ſhall bow down before thee.*

v. 9. Judah *is a Lion's Whelp; from the Prey, my Son, thou art gone up: He ſtooped down, he couched as a Lion, and as an old Lion; Who ſhall rouſe him up?*

10. *The Sceptre ſhall not depart from* Judah, *nor a Lawgiver from between his Feet until* Shiloh *come, and unto him ſhall the gathering of the People be.*

11. *Binding his Fole unto the Vine, and his Aſſes Colt unto the choice Vine; he waſhed his Garments in Wine, and his Cloaths in the Blood of Grapes.*

There is no Prophecy in the *Old Teſtament*, that has undergone ſo many Interpretations, and critical Diſquiſitions, as this now before us. It wou'd make a Volume to report exactly the various Sentiments of learned Men upon this Subject. They who deſire to be acquainted with them may conſult *Huetius* *, Mr. *Le Clerc* †, and Mr. *Saurin* ‡.

* Demonſtratio Evangelica, *Cap.* 4. *Prop.* 9.
† Comment. in locum.
‡ Diſcourſ. Hiſtoriques, &c. *Diſc.* 41.

It may be thought perhaps great Preſumption to attempt any thing upon this Paſſage, after ſo much Pains beſtowed on it by Men of great Figure in Learning; but as I have no Intention to make Shew of much Learning, or much Reading, but only to offer a plain, natural Senſe, of the moſt important Paſſage in this Prophecy, which ſeems to me to ariſe from the very State and Circumſtances of Things, at the time this Prophecy was delivered; I hope it will not be thought the Effect of Vanity, or Oſtentation.

There is a Paſſage in the Book *Eccleſiaſticus*, which will ſerve as a Key to open to us the Nature of the Bleſſings beſtowed on the twelve Tribes by their Father *Jacob*. This Author, the Son of *Sirach*, obſerves, That God gave his Covenant to *Abraham*, *eſtabliſh'd it with* Iſaac, *and made it reſt upon the Head of* Jacob. Thus far the *entire Bleſſing*, and all the Parts of it, veſted in *ſingle* Perſons only: But in the next Step there is an Alteration; for God *divided* Jacob's *Portions*, *among the twelve Tribes did he part them*. There is no queſtion, but that this

Eccluſ. xliv. 19. &c.

℣. 23.

this Paſſage relates to the *Settlement*, and the *Bleſſing*, of the Tribes by *Jacob*, in the xlviii^th and xlix^th of *Geneſis*; and it ſhews us, that the ſeveral Bleſſings given to the ſeveral Tribes are but *Parts*, or *Portions* of the Bleſſing, which *Jacob* received from *Iſaac*; *Iſaac* from *Abraham*; and *Abraham* immediately from *God*. In this View then the ſeveral Bleſſings, mentioned in the xlix^th of *Geneſis*, and limited to the ſeveral Tribes, muſt be conſidered as an Expoſition of the original Bleſſing given to *Abraham*; and the Bleſſing, from which the others are derived, muſt limit and determine the Senſe of the Particulars; which cannot be extended beyond the Bounds of the firſt Promiſe.

Setting aſide the Authority of the Son of *Sirach*, 'tis reaſonable to think that this was the Caſe, from the Cuſtom and Practice in *Abraham*'s Family, in which the Bleſſing of the Father was regularly conveyed to the Son. And when we ſee *Jacob* Bleſſing all his Children, what can we ſuppoſe elſe, but that he is tranſmitting to his Poſterity the Bleſſing which he himſelf

ſelf received. If we look to the Beginning of the xlviii[th] of *Geneſis*, where *Jacob* adopts *Ephraim* and *Manaſſeh*, the two Sons of *Joſeph*, and conſtitutes them *Heads* of *Tribes* in his Family, and conſequently entitles them to a Share, among his own Sons, of the Land of *Canaan*; there will be no room to doubt of this Matter. For *Jacob* founds his Right of allotting the Land of *Canaan*, in the Manner he does, upon God's Grant of that Land to himſelf. Jacob *ſaid unto* Joſeph, *God Almighty appeared unto me at* Luz *in the Land of* Canaan, *and bleſſed me, and ſaid unto me, behold I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and I will make of thee a Multitude of People, and will give this Land to thy Seed after thee, for an everlaſting Poſſeſſion. And now thy two Sons* Ephraim *and* Manaſſeh, *which were born unto thee in the Land of* Egypt, *before I came unto thee into* Egypt, *are mine: As* Reuben *and* Simeon, *they ſhall be mine*, *v.* 3, 4, 5.

Jacob prefaces his Grant to *Joſeph's* Family, with a Recital only of God's Promiſe to make him *fruitful*, and to

give the Land of *Canaan* to him and his Seed; for his Gift to *Joſeph*'s Family went not beyond the Terms of this Grant.

But the Bleſſing of *Abraham*, derived to his *choſen* Seed, conſiſted of two Parts; the Promiſe of the Land of *Canaan*, and the Promiſe of that Son, in whom *all the Nations of the Earth were to bleſſed.* Theſe two Promiſes went inſeparably together from the Beginning, and, we ſhall find they continued, in ſome Degree, to do ſo to the End.

Let us ſee now in what Terms theſe two Promiſes are conveyed.

The Land of *Canaan* to *Abraham.*	The bleſſed Seed to *Abraham.*
The Lord appeared unto Abraham, *and ſaid, Unto thy Seed will I give this Land,* Gen. xii. 7.	*Thou ſhalt be a Bleſſing, and I will bleſs them that bleſs thee, and curſe him that curſeth thee: And in thee ſhall all Families of the Earth be bleſſed,* Gen. xii. 2, 3.

Lift up now thine Eyes, and look from the Place where thou art, Northward, *and* Southward, *and* Eaſtward, *and* Weſtward, *for all the Land which thou ſeeſt, to thee will I give it, and to thy Seed for ever: and I will make thy Seed as the Duſt of the Earth.* Gen. xiii. 14, &c.

To *Iſaac.*

Unto thee, and unto thy Seed I will give all theſe Countries, —— *and I will make thy Seed to multiply as the Stars of Heaven.* Gen. xxvi. 3, 4.

Abraham *ſhall ſurely become a great and mighty Nation, and all the Nations of the Earth ſhall be bleſſed in him.* Gen. xviii. 18.

To *Iſaac.*

And in thy Seed ſhall all the Nations of the Earth be bleſſed. Gen. xxvi. 4.

To *Jacob.*

God give thee of the Dew of Heaven, and the Fatneſs of the Earth, and Plenty of Corn and Wine. Gen. xxvii. 28.

With Corn and Wine have I ſuſtained him. Gen. xxvii. 37.

The Land whereon thou lieſt, to thee will I give it, and

To *Jacob.*

The Elder ſhall ſerve the Younger. Gen. xxv. 23. *Let the People ſerve thee, and Nations bow down to thee; be Lord over thy Brethren, and let thy Mother's Son bow down to thee: Curſed be every one that curſeth thee, and bleſſed be he that bleſſeth thee.* Gen. xxvii. 29.

Behold I have made him thy Lord, and all his Brethren have I given to him for Servants. Gen. xxvii. 37.

In thee and in thy Seed ſhall all the Nations of the

to

to thy Seed. And thy Seed ſhall be as the Duſt of the Earth; and thou ſhalt ſpread abroad to the Weſt, *and to the* Eaſt, *and to the* North, *and to the* South. *Gen.* xxviii. 13, 14.

Earth be bleſſed. Gen. xxviii. 14.

To the Tribe of *Judah.*

Judah *is a Lion's Whelp; from the Prey, my Son, thou art gone up: He ſtooped down, he couched as a Lion, and as an old Lion; who ſhall rouſe him up. The Sceptre ſhall not depart from* Judah, *nor a Lawgiver from be-*

To the Tribe of *Judah.*

Judah *thou art he whom thy Brethren ſhall praiſe; thy Hand ſhall be in the Neck of thine Enemies: Thy Father's Children ſhall bow down before thee.* Gen. xlix. 8.

Until Shilo *come, and unto him ſhall the gathering of the*

tween his Feet, until Shilo *come, and unto him ſhall the Gathering of the People be. Binding his Fole unto the Vine,* &c. Gen. xlix. 9, 10, 11.

People be. Gen. xlix. 10.

If the Words, which I have here placed as the Conveyance of the Promiſe of the *bleſſed Seed* to the Tribe of *Judah*, be not admitted in that Senſe, there are no others, relating to this, or any of the other Tribes, which make any Mention, much leſs any Settlement of this Part of *Jacob*'s Bleſſing. And yet there never was any Doubt, either in the antient *Jewiſh* Church before *Chriſt*, or among the *Jews* ſince the Time of *Chriſt*, but that the Promiſe of the *Meſſiah* was limited to the Tribe of *Judah* in this Bleſſing: nor is it reaſonable to imagine that *Jacob* in dividing his Bleſſing among his Poſterity, ſhou'd forget the chief and principal Part, which had been with ſo much Solemnity conveyed from

from *Abraham*, through *Iſaac*, to himſelf. Beſides, the Expreſſion here uſed, *Thou art he whom thy Brethren ſhall praiſe*, is equivalent to what was ſaid to *Abraham*, *Thou ſhalt be a Bleſſing*; and to what was ſaid to *Jacob*, *Bleſſed be he that bleſſeth thee*, and muſt conſequently mean the ſame thing. But of this Part I have already treated in the foregoing Diſcourſes, and will not burden the Reader and my ſelf, with Repetitions.

The Promiſe of the bleſſed Seed could not be divided, for a Man can deſcend but from *one* Tribe; *a Son* can be born but of *one* Father; and therefore this Part of *Jacob*'s Bleſſing went entire to the Tribe of *Judah*. All the other Tribes have their ſpecial Bleſſing aſſigned them out of the promiſed Land; and Interpreters need not be concerned, as ſome of them are, to find wherein the *peculiar Bleſſing* of ſome of the Sons of *Jacob*, to whom, or of whom, very little is ſaid, does conſiſt; for the making them *Heads* of *Tribes* conveyed to them a Right to a Share in the Land of *Canaan*, and in

that their Bleſſing conſiſted, and by that they receiv'd a Portion of the Bleſſing of of their Father.

The Promiſe to *Abraham*, of *multiplying his Seed*, and giving them the *Land of Canaan* for a *Poſſeſſion*, implyed neceſſarily a Promiſe of temporal Power and Dominion. For a People cannot poſſeſs a Land without ſome Form, or Rule of Government among them. All the Promiſes therefore of a numerous Iſſue, of Strength and Courage in ſubduing Enemies, and the like, are incident to the Promiſe of the Land of *Canaan*, and muſt be referred to it. Thus when we hear the Character of *Judah*; *Judah is a Lion's Whelp*; *from the Prey my Son, thou art gone up: He ſtooped down and couched as a Lion, and as an old Lion*; *who ſhall rouſe him?* To what elſe can we apply theſe Images, of Courage and Bravery, but to the martial Diſpoſition of the Tribe of *Judah*, and to their Victories obtained over the antient Poſſeſſors of the Land of *Canaan?* In like Manner all the Promiſes of Plenty are part of the Promiſe, which God gave to *Abraham* and his Poſterity,

of

of a *Land flowing with Milk and Honey.* Of *Judah*'tis ſaid—*Binding his Fole unto the Vine, and his Aſſes Colt unto the choice Vine; He waſhed his Garments in Wine, and his Clothes in the Blood of Grapes. His Eyes ſhall be red with Wine, and his Teeth white with Milk.* This is a *Portion* of *Jacob*'s Bleſſing; and can it naturally be deduced from any Part of the Bleſſing beſtowed on him by his Father, but this only? *God give thee of the Dew of Heaven, and the Fatneſs of the Earth, and Plenty of Corn and Wine.* Gen. xxvii. 28.

There remains ſtill to be accounted for, the Paſſage relating to the Sceptre of *Judah:* The Words are theſe;

> *The Sceptre ſhall not depart from* Judah, *nor a Lawgiver from between his Feet, until* Shiloh *come; and unto him ſhall the gathering of the People be.*

The Promiſe to *Abraham* was, that he ſhould be the *Father of many Nations*; and of *Sarah* it is ſaid, *She ſhall be a Mo-* Gen. xvii. 5.

ther of Nations, Kings of People ſhall be of her. To *Jacob* it is ſaid, *God multiply thee, that thou mayſt be a Multitude of People.* The Succeſſion in the Houſe of *Abraham* was preſerved in ſingle Perſons till *Jacob*'s Time; he is the firſt who had a numerous Iſſue, and all of them entitled to the Promiſes made to their Forefathers. The Sons of *Jacob* lived with him, as Children of his Family only, till his going into *Egypt*; for when the Account is given of their Removal to *Egypt*, they are reckoned not as Heads of Tribes, but as ſo many Perſons only, belonging to the Family of *Jacob: All the Souls that came with* Jacob *into* Egypt, *which came out of his Loins, beſides* Jacob's *Sons Wives, all the Souls were threeſcore and ſix*, to which *Jacob*, and *Joſeph*, and his two Sons, born in *Egypt*, being added, 'tis ſaid, *All the Souls of the Houſe of* Jacob, *which came into* Egypt, *were threeſcore and ten.* Hitherto there is no mention of any *Tribe*, or of any *Houſe*, but the Houſe of *Jacob*. This State of Things continued during the ſeventeen Years of *Jacob*'s Life in *Egypt*,

Gen. xvii. 16.

Gen. xxviii. 3.

Gen. xlvi. 26.

Ibib. ℣. 27.

in

all which Time there is no appearence any Power or Authority, in any *Rulers*, or *Elders*, or *Heads* of Tribes, but *Jacob* only. And how ſhou'd there, before any *Tribes* were appointed, or any Form of Government was ſettled? When *Jacob* drew near his End, he ſummoned all his Family, in order to appoint the Form of Government which ſhou'd take place after his Death, and continue as long as his Poſterity held Poſſeſſion of the Land of *Canaan*. The xlix^th Chapter of *Geneſis* is commonly called, Jacob's *Bleſſing of his Sons*; but it might as well be called *Jacob*'s *Appointment* of twelve *Rulers* or *Princes* to govern the Houſe of *Iſrael*. For tell me, how came this Form of Government, by a Diſtribution of the People into twelve Tribes with Heads and Rulers over them, to be pitched upon rather than any other? There is no Deſignation of this Form of Government in any other Place of Scripture; and it cou'd not be ſettled tacitly, by a mere Devolution of *Jacob*'s Power, among his Sons, after his Deceaſe; for had that been the Caſe, *Ephraim* and

Manaſſeh

Manaſſeh cou'd not have been Heads of Tribes, for their Father *Joſeph* was living, and he muſt have been Head of one Tribe, as the reſt of his Brethren were. Nor is it to be imagined, that ſo conſiderable a Part of the Story, as the founding and ſettling the Government of *Iſrael*, ſhou'd be paſſed over by *Moſes* in ſilence; and his Reader left to ſupply by Imagination ſo material a Part of the Hiſtory. It muſt therefore be allowed, that the Government of *Iſrael* is ſettled by *Jacob* in the xlviii^th^ and xlix^th^ of *Geneſis*.

All the Circumſtances reported in theſe two Chapters anſwer to this Idea. In the firſt Place *Jacob* gives the Birthright, as to the temporal Inheritance, to *Joſeph*, by giving him a double Portion, and raiſing out of his Family two Princes, or Heads of Tribes, in *Iſrael*: Ephraim *and* Manaſſeh *are mine: As* Reuben *and* Simeon, *they ſhall be mine.* And becauſe other Iſſue from *Joſeph* wou'd have ſtood upon a Level in point of Deſcent with *Ephraim* and *Manaſſeh*, and it might have been doubtful whether they might not claim to be Rulers themſelves, and

Gen. xlviii. 5.

equal

equal to their Brothers, *Jacob* directs that they ſhould be reckoned in the Tribes of their two Brothers, *They ſhall be called after the Name of their Brethren in their Inheritance.* By this Deſignation of *Jacob*, the two Sons of *Joſeph* were appointed, each to be the Head of a ſeparate People; for this, *Jacob*, ſpeaking of theſe two Grandchildren, declares; *He*, Manaſſeh, *ſhall become a People, and he alſo ſhall be great: But his Brother*, Ephraim, *ſhall be greater than he, and his Seed ſhall become a Multitude of Nations.* In the following Chapter, *Jacob* ſpeaks to his Sons as the *Repreſentatives* of ſo many *diſtinct People*; which is expreſsly remarked by *Moſes*, *All theſe are the twelve Tribes of* Iſrael; and it is evident likewiſe from hence, that the Things foretold and aſcribed to them, are by no means capable of being underſtood of ſingle Perſons. Here the Promiſe to *Abraham*, *That he ſhould be Father of many Nations*; and to *Sarah*, *That Kings of People ſhould be of her*, began to take Effect; for, from this time forward, the People of *Iſrael* are reckoned by their

Gen. xlviii. 6.

Gen. xlviii. 19.

Gen. xlix. 28.

their *Tribes*, which were ſo many *diſtinct People*, or (in the Language of the Book of *Geneſis*) *Nations*, independent of each other, and ſubſiſting under *Rulers* and *Judges* of their own; but confederated for mutual Defence, and the Maintenance of one Law to be given equally to all. It ought to be no Wonder to hear the Tribes of *Iſrael* called *Nations*, and their Heads *Princes*; for the ſame Language is uſed of *Iſhmael*'s twelve Sons: — *Theſe are the Sons of* Iſhmael, *and theſe are their Names, by their Towns and by their Caſtles; twelve Princes according to their Nations.* Theſe Princes could be no more than Heads of Tribes; *and ſuch Princes likewiſe were the *Dukes*, and the *Kings* of *Edom*. † *Iſhmael* was the Son of *Abraham*, and *Eſau* was Son of *Iſaac*; and their Families could not be much more numerous than *Jacob*'s, and yet they are reckoned, according to their Princes, and their Dukes, and by their ſeveral Nations. In truth all the Govern-

Gen. xxv. 16.

* Vide Clericum in locum.

† Gen. xxxvi. Vide Clericum ad verſum decimum quintum.

ments

ments of the *East* seem at this Time to have been of this Sort. What were the four Kings, think you, whom *Abraham* overthrew with three hundred and eighteen of his own Servants, and the Assistance of his three Friends, who might perhaps make as many more? What were the thirty two Kings, whose Country was divided among the twelve Tribes? The Princes of the Tribes of *Israel* were surely equal in Power and Dignity to such Kings; and such were the Kings of those Days. This Observation will teach us to restrain and limit our Ideas within due Bounds, when we read of *Kings*, and *Princes*, and *Sceptres*, and *Judges*, and *Nations*, in these early Times; and not to imagine, because the Words are the same which we now use, that they must necessarily signify as high Degrees of Power, as now they do.

What kind of Power *Jacob* settled upon these Heads of Tribes, may appear from what he himself says of *Dan*; Dan *shall judge his People, as one of the Tribes of* Israel. All the People of *Israel* were not *Dan*'s People, and therefore 'tis absurd

Gen. xlix. 16.

abſurd to imagine any Power given to *Dan*, or any of his Deſcendents, over the whole Houſe of *Jacob*. Beſides nothing *peculiar* is given to *Dan* in this Grant; he was to judge *his* own *People* indeed; but how? Why *as one of the Tribes of* Iſrael * From whence 'tis evident, that every Tribe had its own Princes and Judges; and that every Prince, or Head of a Tribe, judged his own People; conſequently every Tribe had *a Sceptre*, and a *Law-giver*, as well as the Tribe of *Judah*.

That this Power, in the Heads of Tribes, took place immediately upon the Death of *Jacob*, may be collected from hence, that from this Time, all Applications and Meſſages are, not to the People, but to the Elders of *Iſrael*. The Command of God ſent to the *Houſe of Jacob*, and the *Children of Iſrael*, in *Egypt*, was delivered by *Moſes* to the *Elders of the People*. The People and their Rulers are diſtinguiſhed plainly in *Exod.* xxxiv.

Exod. iii. 16. xii. 21.

Exod. xix. 3, 7.

* Quia penes ejus ſobolem in communi politia pars gubernationis & imperii erit, ut tribus iſta caput unum efficiat. *Vatablus in locum.*

Aaron

Aaron *and all the Rulers of the Congregation returned unto him, and* Moſes *talked with them. And afterward all the Children of* Iſrael *came nigh.* Exod. xxxiv. 31, 32.

The Government, in the ſeveral Tribes of *Iſrael*, was not Monarchical, but Ariſtocratical, as appears by comparing the Paſſages, referred to in the Margin; and that no one Tribe had a Superiority over another, is plain upon the Death of *Joſhua*; for then the People enquire of God, who ſhould *go up for them againſt the* Canaanites. A Queſtion, that would not have been asked, had any one Tribe, or Ruler of one Tribe, had the Right of leading and governing the reſt. When the Children of *Benjamin* were guilty in the Matter of the *Levite*'s Concubine, no one Tribe, or Ruler of one Tribe, pretends to call them to account for it; but all the Tribes of *Iſrael* jointly ſend to expoſtulate with them, and to demand Juſtice; and upon Refuſal of Juſtice, recourſe is had to Arms immediately. What Authority the Princes of Tribes had among their own People, may be collected from the Song of *Deborah*, Exod. vi. 14. Numb. xxxiv. 18. Joſh. xxii. 14. Judges i. 1.

Judges v. 9, 10. where they are deſcribed, *as Governours in* Iſrael, *riding on white Aſſes, and ſitting in Judgment.* And 'tis with Alluſion to this Form of Government that our Saviour promiſes his Diſciples, that they *ſhall ſit on twelve Thrones, judging the twelve Tribes of* Iſrael. Matth. xix. 28.

Having now ſeen the Conſtitution of the Tribes of *Iſrael*, and the Powers and Authorities incident to a Tribe, as ſuch, we may look back to the Prophecy, and try whether this Light will direct us in the Expoſition of it. *Jacob* having ſettled *twelve Princes*, or Rulers of People, in his Houſe, ſummons them together to hear what *ſhould befal them in the laſt Days*; he ſpeaks to them as Heads of People, and not as ſingle Perſons, and what he ſays relates to them, and their People collectively, and not to them perſonally. Since then he ſpeaks to all *as Princes*, and tells *Judah*, in particular, that the *SCEPTRE ſhould not depart from* HIM *until Shiloh came*, what can we underſtand by the *Sceptre*, in this Place, but that *very Power, and Right of Government*, now ſettled and eſtabliſh'd in

in the Houſe of *Judah*, and in all the other Tribes; and which *Jacob* foreſaw would depart from the other Tribes long before the coming of *Shiloh*, but would remain with *Judah* until *Shiloh* came? The Promiſe to *Judah*, that his *Sceptre ſhould not depart*, amounts to a Declaration that the *Sceptres* of the other Tribes ſhould depart, and plainly ſhews that the Sceptre was not a thing peculiar to *Judah*; for the Promiſe here to *Judah* is not, that he ſhould *have a Sceptre*, which none of his Brethren had, or were to have; but that *his Sceptre* ſhould *continue* longer with him, than his Brothers *Sceptres* ſhould *continue* with them.

Moſt of the Interpreters, whom I have conſulted, take it for granted, and it is the common Notion, that the thing here promiſed to *Judah is the Sceptre*; and that the SCEPTRE was not to be ſettled in *Judah*'s Family, *till ſome Ages* after the Death of *Jacob:* Which laſt Obſervation is grounded upon *Jacob*'s Words —— *That I may tell you that which ſhall befal you in the laſt Days.* Gen. xlix. 1.

But the firſt of theſe Obſervations has no

Ground in the Text: nay, rather, is abſolutely inconſiſtent with it. The antient Verſions all agree in one Senſe, the ſame which our *Engliſh* Verſion has expreſſed, *The Sceptre ſhall not depart from* Judah. Do not theſe Words ſuppoſe the *Sceptre* to be already in the Hand of *Judah?* Is there any Senſe in ſaying, that a thing ſhall not *depart*, which never yet was in Poſſeſſion? The Prophecy is not a *Grant* of the *Sceptre*, but a *Confirmation* of it; now a Confirmation of *nothing*, is *nothing*, and to make it *ſomething*, the Poſſeſſion of the Thing confirmed muſt be ſuppoſed. I know not by what Rules of Language, or *Grammar*, theſe Words can be conſtrued into a *Grant* of the *Sceptre*; and though ſo many Writers, and Interpreters, have followed this Senſe, yet I do not remember to have ſeen one Paſſage, or Parallel Expreſſion, from the Scripture, or any other Author, produced to juſtify the Interpretation. Yet ſurely, 'tis no uſual Way of ſpeaking, to ſay, *Your Sceptre ſhall not depart*, when the Speech is directed to one who has *no Sceptre*, nor is to have one for many Ages.

The ſecond Obſervation, when rightly applied, is right; and if the *Continuance* of the Sceptre of *Judah* be, as I ſuppoſe, the Thing foretold, it extends to the *very laſt Days* of the *Jewiſh* State; and in this reſpect the Interpretation is juſtified.

Another Thing ſuppoſed by moſt Interpreters is, that the *Sceptre*, here mentioned, is an Emblem of Dominion over *all* the *Tribes* of *Jacob*. But how can that be? Had not *Jacob* ſettled a *Sceptre* in every Tribe, as is evident ℣. 16. Dan *ſhall judge his People as one of the Sceptres* * *of* Iſrael? Suppoſe a Father had divided his Eſtate among twelve Sons, and ſhou'd ſay of one of them, *The Eſtate ſhall not depart from* John *for many Ages*; Cou'd you poſſibly ſuppoſe him to mean more than the *Share* of the *Eſtate* given to *John*? Cou'd you underſtand him to mean, that *all the Eſtate*, the twelve Shares, ſhou'd come to *John*, and continue in his Family? The Caſe is the ſame here, twelve Princes are created; of one of

* *The original Word is* Schevet, *the ſame which is rendered Sceptre in the Prophecy relating to* Judah.

them *Jacob* ſays, *The Sceptre ſhall not depart FROM HIM——until* Shiloh *come.* Is it not plain then that the *Sceptres* are diſtinguiſhed here, and that 'tis foretold of one, that it ſhall long outlaſt the reſt? The Words therefore, *The Sceptre ſhall not depart from* Judah, are equivalent to theſe, Judah's *Sceptre ſhall not depart*; and this Senſe is juſtified by the Original, the Seventy, the Vulgate, and the *Chaldee* Paraphraſt †. It muſt be remembred, that *Judah* does not, in *Gen.* xlix. mean, what in after-times it came to mean, the whole People of the *Jews*; but it means diſtinctly the Tribe of *Judah* only; and the Words, now under Conſideration, can poſſibly import no more than this; *The Sceptre ſhall not be taken from the Tribe of* Judah — Conſequently the *Sceptre* here is an Emblem of *Authority in* and *over a Tribe only*; and can by no means, in theſe Circumſtances, be made to ſignify or denote an *Authority over all the Tribes of* Iſrael.

† Non auferetur principatum habens à Domo Judæ, C. P. *The Ruler ſhall not be taken away from the Houſe of* Judah.

The

The ſame Word in the Original *(Schevet)* ſignifies a *Tribe*, and a *Sceptre*; and probably a *Tribe*, becauſe a Tribe is a Collection of People under the Government of *one Sceptre*, or Authority *. Others, I know, account otherwiſe for this Signification †. But the Seventy Interpreters would never have uſed the *Greek* Word σκῆπτρον, to denote a *Tribe*, had they not thought that the original Word was uſed to ſignify a *Tribe*, upon the Notion of its being a Body under one and the ſame Government. When the People were aſſembled for the Choice of a King, *Samuel* ſays to them, preſent your ſelves before the Lord, *by your Tribes*, καὶ τὰ σκῆπτρα ὑμῶν, (Seventy) *and the Tribe of* Benjamin *was taken*, καὶ προσηλήφθη σκῆπτρον Βενιαμείν, (Seventy.) When God

1 Sam. x. 19.

Ibid. ver. 20.

* Traductum vero nomen eſt ad ſignificandum tribum——quod unaquæq; tribus ſuam peculiarem virgam haberet, nomine ſuo inſcriptam, quam tribuum principes — Manu geſtare conſueverant — Cum Dominus Aaronem his verbis alloquitur; *ſed & fratres tuos de tribu Levi, & ſceptrum Patris tui ſume tecum*; intellige ſceptrum ipſum, & totam tribum quæ ſceptro ſignificabatur, & regebatur. *Menochius de rep. Heb. Lib.* 1. *cap.* 4.

† *Schevet*; Tribus, quod ex arbore ſeu ſtirpe nata ſit, h. e. è patre. Kircherus, Concord. in voce, *Schevet*.

threatens *Solomon* to divide his Kingdom, he adds, *but I will give one Tribe to thy Son*, σκηπτρον ἐν δώσω τῷ υἱῷ σου (Seventy). Many other Inſtances there are, but theſe are ſufficient to ſhew the Relation between the Sceptre and the Tribe, and that it is conformable to the Language and Uſage of Scripture, to underſtand by the Word *Sceptre*, the *Authority* in, and over a *ſingle Tribe*.

1 Kings xi. 13.

What the true Import of the Word *Lawgiver* is, in this Place, cannot be determined but by reference to the Government or Conſtitution intended. When we know the Form of Government, we can eaſily dermine what *Lawgiver* ſignifies; but we cannot from the Word *Lawgiver* determine the Form of Government intended. The Reaſon is, becauſe there are as many Kinds of *Lawgivers*, as there are Forms of Government in the World. The Senſe of the Word *Lawgiver*, in this Place, muſt neceſſarily therefore be governed by the Senſe of the Word *Sceptre*. If *Sceptre* ſignifies here the Authority and Power over a Tribe only, the Word *Lawgiver*, joined with

it,

it, must necessarily be confined to mean such *Lawgivers* only, as single Tribes had within themselves. Consequently, what has been said to fix the Meaning of the Word *Sceptre*, serves equally to fix the Sense of *Lawgiver*. The Seventy Interpreters have rendered the Word *Schevet* by Ἄρχων, and *Mechokek* by Ἡγούμενος; * Mr. *Ioncourt* suspects that they were led by a kind of national Pride and Vanity to make Choice of these Terms, that carry in them such grand Ideas of *Royal* and *Princely* Power. But before the passing of this Censure, he ought to have examined whether the Seventy do constantly, or usually, employ these Terms to signify so much Power as he supposes. Ἄρχων and Ἄρχοντες, are used by the Seventy above an hundred Times, at least, to signify the *Head*, or *Heads*, of the Tribes of *Israel*. There are twelve In-

* Prevenus de toute la pompe de la superiorité & des grandeurs dont je viens de parler, ils ont cru que *Schevet*, qui signifie communément *Verge*, doit être en cet endroit une *verge de Commandement*; c'est pourquoi entrainez de ce beau côté, ils ont traduit hardiment *le Prince ne sera point ôté à Juda*. Letters Critiques, p. 163.

stances

ſtances of this Uſe of the Word in one
Numb. ii. Chapter of the Book of *Numbers*, and
Numb. iv. about ſixteen in another. The Inſtances indeed are ſo many, that it is quite needleſs to produce any, the *Concordance* will furniſh Authorities to every Enquirer. The Caſe is the ſame as to the Word Ἡγέμων. In 2 *Chron.* v. 1. we meet with both theſe Words together in the ſame Senſe. Solomon *aſſembled all the Elders of* Iſrael, καὶ πάντας τοὺς ἄρχοντας τῶν φυλῶν, τοὺς ἡγεμόνας πατριῶν τῶν υἱῶν Ἰσραὴλ. So again, 1 *Chr.* vii. 4. *All theſe were the Children of* Aſher, Ἄρχοντες οἴκου πατριῶν— ἡγούμενοι τῶν ἀρχόντων τῶν γενεαλογηθέντων ἐν τῇ στάσει τοῦ πολέμου. Thus the Sons of *Eſau* who were no other than Heads of Tribes, are called Ἡγεμόνες, Gen. xxxvi. and the Sons of *Iſhmael*, who were Princes of the ſame Sort, are ſtyled, *Gen.* xxv. Ἄρχοντες. What Reaſon is there now to ſuſpect the Seventy of Vanity, Prejudice, or Artifice; or to ſuppoſe that they mean any higher Degree of Power by the Words in this Place, than they do in many other Places, where they make uſe of them?

A Law-

A Lawgiver from between his Feet: There is no Interpretation of theſe Words, but what ſuits with the Expoſition of the Prophecy now propoſed; and therefore I may refer my ſelf in this, to the Reader's Choice among the ſeveral Interpretations given of this Phraſe. The Words may be conſtrued two Ways, for we may either read thus, *A Lawgiver from between his Feet, ſhall not depart from* Judah; or thus, *A Lawgiver ſhall not depart from between the Feet of* Judah. In the firſt Way of Reading, the Meaning probably is, *That the Lawgivers of* Judah *ſhould be of his own Deſcendents*; and ſo they were: In the ſecond Reading, the Meaning is, *That the Tribe of* Judah *ſhould have Lawgivers of their own, to the very laſt Times.* This is *Wagenſeil*'s * Senſe of the Words; and it is the Senſe of *Onkelos.*

But ſuppoſe the original Word to be rightly rendered, in this place, *Lawgiver*, it will afford a ſtrong Objection againſt any Interpretation, which extends the

* Carminis Lipmanni confutatio, *p.* 293.

Powers

Powers here mentioned over all the People of *Iſrael*. For the Tribe of *Judah* never had a *Legiſlative* Authority over all the Tribes; no, not even in the Days of *David* and *Solomon*. When the People deſired a King, they expreſſed their Meaning very clearly, to have a *Judge, and one to go out before them to fight their Battles*. And when *Samuel* rehearſes to them the *Manner* of their *King*, there is no Appearence that he was to be a *Lawgiver*. And *Moſes*, who was the only *Lawgiver* of the People of *Iſrael*, had excluded all Kings from this Power, *They were to have a Copy of the Law*, and not to *turn aſide from the Commandment, to the right Hand or to the left*. And the Ordinances made by *David*, relating to the Service of the Temple, were eſtabliſhed by Authority and Conſent of the Princes and Rulers of Tribes. So little Appearence is there, that *Judah* was ever *Lawgiver* to all the Tribes of *Jacob*. Nor indeed cou'd this Power, in a proper Senſe, belong to ſingle Tribes; for tho' they might, and did make ſuch Rules, as we commonly call By-laws; yet the Law

1 Sam. viii. 19.

Deut. xvii. 18, *&c.*

Ezra. viii. 20.

of

of *Moſes* was their unalterable Law, both for Civil and Eccleſiaſtical Affairs. And therefore I rather chuſe to underſtand *Judge*, (for ſo the Word in the Original may be underſtood) than *Lawgiver*, in this Place; and this agrees beſt to the Paſſage referred to before, *Dan ſhall* JUDGE *his People, as one of the Tribes of* Iſrael.

As to the Word *Shiloh*, I have nothing to add to the Expoſitions of the Learned. They who are deſirous to ſee the ſeveral Ways of accounting for the Signification of this Word, may conſult the Authors referred to by *Wagenſeil**. *Le Clerc* †, and *Saurin* ‡. If by this Word we underſtand *Pacificus*, the *Peace-maker*, or Reſtorer of Peace, who can it deſign, but him in whoſe Time there was to be *abundance* of *Peace*, and *Righteouſneſs* for *evermore?* If we underſtand by it, *Mittendus, the Perſon to be ſent*, who can that be, but the ſame, of whom ſo many Promiſes and Prophecies had been given;

* Carm. Lip. conf. *p.* 294.
† In locum.
‡ *Diſcourſe* 41. p. 519, *&c.*

even

even the *bleſſed Seed?* If we chuſe rather to interpret it *Filius ejus*, his Son; who is this *peculiar Son* of *Judah*, but the bleſſed Seed; the Promiſe of which was ſettled on *Judah?* If we take the Verſion of the Seventy for our Guide, and render the Word with them, τὰ ἀποκείμενα αὐτῷ, or ᾧ ἀπόκειται); The ſame Perſon ſtill is pointed out; the *bleſſed Seed*, was the great Treaſure in reſerve for *Judah*; the bleſſed Seed was he for whom all Things were reſerved, whoſe the Kingdom was to be. If, laſtly, we follow Mr. *Le Clerc*, and render the Word *Finis*, (the End,) what End can be intended, but the End of the Settlement and Eſtabliſhment made by *Jacob* at this Time; or, in other Words, the End of God's preſent Covenant, in virtue of which the Diviſion of the Land of *Canaan* was made among the twelve Tribes by *Jacob*, and which was to be ſucceeded by the *Covenant of better Hopes?* In all Views the Prophecy muſt terminate in *Chriſt*; and a *Continuance* of the Power *now* ſettled in the Houſe of *Judah* is promiſed till the *Meſſiah* comes. This agrees with the Senſe of all antient Expoſitors,

poſitors, both *Jews* and *Chriſtians*, as may be ſeen in the Authors already mentioned.

All theſe Expoſitions depend upon the *Interpretation* of the *Word Shiloh*. And if we conſider the *Context*, it will carry us to the ſame Point. *Judah* is the only one who receiv'd *two* Bleſſings from his Father, viz. The *Promiſe* of the bleſſed Seed; and *a Portion* in the Land of *Canaan*, for the Maintenance of which a Government was eſtabliſhed in his Family. This Prophecy promiſes a longer Continuance of the Government in the Houſe of *Judah*, than other Tribes were to expect, and fixes a Term for the Duration of *Judah*'s *Sceptre*. What could make this Diſtinction, but the peculiar Bleſſing given to *Judah*? And taking both his Bleſſings together, is it not natural to think, that the Continuance of his temporal Dominion and Inheritance is aſſured to him, to laſt till the Commencement of his better Promiſe? This is according to the Analogy of all the Prophecies from *Abraham*'s Time; in all which the Land of *Canaan* is inſeparably annexed

to the Promiſe of the bleſſed Seed. Whoever had the *one* Promiſe had the *other*; whoever was excluded from the *one* was excluded from the *other*. For this Reaſon *Iſhmael* and *Eſau* were ſent out to plant other Countries, and had not a Foot allowed them in the Land of *Canaan*. Upon the Settlement made by *Jacob* in his Family, the Land of *Canaan* was divided, but *that Part* of it which attended upon the Promiſe of the bleſſed Seed, was, (as formerly) ſo united and annexed to that Promiſe, that it could not be entirely forfeited, and loſt 'till the *bleſſed* Seed came. And this is the Reaſon why the Land of *Judah*, in diſtinction from the Land poſſeſſed by the other Tribes, is called by the Prophet *Iſaiah*, the *Land* of *Immanuel*. *He ſhall paſs through* Judah, *He ſhall overflow and go over, he ſhall reach even to the Neck, and the ſtretching out of his Wings ſhall fill the Breadth of thy Land, O* Immanuel *Iſa.* viii. 8. What other Reaſon can be aſſigned for calling the Land of the Houſe of *Judah*, the Land of *Immanuel*, rather than any other Part of the Land of *Canaan*,

naan, but this very Prophecy now under Conſideration; which was indeed a Settlement of the Land of *Judah*, for a Term not to expire 'till *Immanuel* came?

Unto him ſhall the gathering of the People be. They who underſtand this Paſſage, as relating to the *Meſſiah*, have great Reaſon on their Side, as well from parallel Places of Scripture, as from the Authority of the moſt antient Interpreters. But yet ſome learned Men are otherwiſe minded, and think that theſe Words by natural Conſtruction are to be referred to *Judah**; and conſidering that *Judah* is the Perſon here *principally* concerned, and whoſe Condition in the laſt Days is deſcribed; that *Shiloh* is not, in grammatical Conſtruction, the principal Perſon in *this Paſſage*, but is mentioned only as the *Terminus ad quem*, the Term to which the *Sceptre* ſhould continue with *Judah*; it ſeems more conſonant to the Rules of Language to appropriate this Character to *Judah*, than to *Shiloh*. As to the main of the Prophecy, there is no Diffe-

* *See* Mr. Le Clerc's *Comment, and Note upon the Place.*

rence which ever way we take. According to the laſt of the two Interpretations, the Prophecy contains a moſt exact Deſcription of the *State* and *Polity* of *Judah*, during the *Continuance* of his *Sceptre* after the *Sceptres* were removed from the other Tribes of *Iſrael*, that can be imagined. For the Remnant of all the Tribes after the *Aſſyrian* Captivity, were indeed *gathered* to *Judah*, and fell under the *Obedience* of that one Tribe; and the whole Nation from being ſtyled the *People of* Iſrael, were thenceforwards ſtyled, the *People of* Judah, or *Jews*. In this Senſe, the Prophecy began to operate immediately upon the Diviſion of the two Kingdoms. God promiſed *Solomon* to *give one Tribe to his Son for his Servant* David's *ſake*, which is twice again repeated in the ſame Chapter. But in truth two Tribes, that of *Judah* and that of *Benjamin*, together with part of the Tribe of *Simeon*, and many Families, of the *Levites*, and of the other Tribes, who dwelt within the Borders of *Judah*, remained under the Obedience of the Kingdom of *Judah*; and no Reaſon can be

1 Kings xi. 13. Ibid ℣ 32, 36.

given why this Body is called *one* Tribe, but only this, that the Tribe of *Judah* alone maintained its Power, and Conſtitution, the reſt were all *gathered* to this Tribe, and ſunk in it. This Account may be collected from the Text it ſelf; 'tis ſaid, that the *Children of* Iſrael, *which dwelt in the Cities of* Judah, Rehoboam *reigned over them.* And when an Account is given of *Rehoboam*'s raiſing Forces to recover his Kingdom, 'tis ſaid expreſsly, that he aſſembled *all the Houſe of* Judah *with the Tribe of* Benjamin. And yet in the very Verſe before 'tis ſaid, *there was none that followed the Houſe of* David, *but the Tribe of* Judah *only.* Yet ſtill, when God ſends a Meſſage to thoſe under the Obedience of *Rehoboam*, they are mentioned thus, *The Houſe of* Judah *and* Benjamin, *and the Remnant of the People.* Theſe are they who afterwards were comprehended under the Name of *Jews*; a Term introduced to ſignify the Tribe of *Judah*, and all the reſt of the People united with and under that Tribe. From the Diviſion of the Kingdoms, *Judah* was conſidered as making the Peo-

1 Kings xii. 17.

Ibid ℣. 21.

Ibid ℣. 20.

Ibid ℣. 23.

ple of one entire Kingdom, and gave name to all aſſociated with them. We have a clear Account how this Matter ſtood in the ſecond Book of *Chronicles*. *The Prieſts and the Levites that were in all* Iſrael *reſorted to* Rehoboam, *out of all their Coaſts — And after them, out of all the Tribes of* Iſrael, *ſuch as ſet their Hearts to ſeek the Lord God of* Iſrael, *came to* Jeruſalem, *to ſacrifice unto the Lord God of their Fathers. So they ſtrengthened the* Kingdom *of* Judah. All who came from other Tribes were conſidered but as an *additional Strength* to *Judah*, they preſerved no diſtinct Polity of their own as belonging to other Tribes. From the Time of the *Aſſyrian* Captivity, the Caſe is very plain; there remained, without doubt, many private Families and Perſons in the Land, who eſcaped in the general Confuſion; but they ſubſiſted not as Parts of diſtinct Tribes, but fell under the Dominion and Power of *Judah*; as appears in the Reformation made by King *Joſiah*, which reach'd, not only to the Cities of *Judah*, but to all the *Countries that pertain'd to the Children of* Iſrael,

2 Chron. xi. 13, 16, 17, xv. 9.

Iſrael, to the Cities of Manaſſeh *and* Ephraim, *and* Simeon, *even unto* Naphtali; Cities, in which the Kings of *Judah* had no Influence or Authority, ſo long as the ſeparate Kingdom of *Iſrael* ſubſiſted. After the Return from the *Babyloniſh* Captivity, we hear of little elſe but *Jews*, tho' we know, the *Benjamites* were join'd with them; and the Decree of *Cyrus* being a general Permiſſion for the Return of all the Tribes, many Families of other Tribes return'd to their own Country: But all theſe were *gathered* to *Judah*, and became one People. And in this State and Condition Things continu'd till the Coming of *Chriſt*, and the laſt Deſtruction of the Nation by the *Roman* Power. 2 Chron. xxxiv. 6, 33. 1 Chron. ix. 3. Luke ii. 36. Acts xxvi. 7.

If we conſider how the Event correſponds to this Interpretation of the Prophecy in *other Reſpects*, we ſhall find that from the Death of *Jacob*, there was a Government ſettled in the ſeveral Tribes, with reſpect to their own diſtinct People; that the Heads of Tribes together did, by common Conſent, adminiſter the Affairs of the People in general. This appears during the Abode of the Children

of *Iſrael* in *Egypt*; for *Moſes* and *Aaron* were ſent to the *Elders of the People* *; theſe Elders were *Heads of Houſes*, as appears ſoon after in the Hiſtory †, and *Rulers of the Congregation* ‡. That the People were form'd into Tribes in *Egypt* is plain; becauſe they are mention'd in that Capacity as ſoon as they got into the Wilderneſs, without any new Order or Conſtitution to make them ſo. The Stones of the Prieſt's Breaſt-plate were twelve by the Appointment of God, to anſwer to the Number, and to bear the Levit. Names of the *twelve Tribes*; and when God orders an Account to be taken of the Number of the Children of *Iſrael*, ſoon after their coming out of *Egypt*, a Man of *every Tribe*, and *Head of the Houſe* Numb. i. 3. *of his Fathers*, is appointed to aſſiſt *Moſes*. Theſe Heads of Houſes are particularly reckon'd up and nam'd; and their Quality and Dignity in *Iſrael* is ſet-

* Exod. iii. 16. iv. 29. Τὸν γερουσίαν τῶν υἱῶν Ἰσραήλ. The Senate of the Children of *Iſrael*. LXX. *Cœtum filiorum Iſrael*. Vulg. Exod. xii. 3.

† Exod vi. 14. Ἀρχηγοὶ οἴκων πατριῶν αὐτῶν LXX. Principes domorum per familias ſuas. Vulg.

‡ Exod. xvi. 22. Ἄρχοντες τῆς συναγωγῆς. LXX.

forth

forth in theſe Words, *Theſe were the renowned of the Congregation, Princes of the Tribes of their Fathers, Heads of Thouſands in* Iſrael. Ibid ℣. 16.

Since then there were *Elders*, and *Heads of Houſes* in *Egypt*, who acted with Authority for the People, and to whom, therefore, the Meſſage of God by *Moſes* and *Aaron* was directed: Since the Diſtinction of Tribes appears plainly as ſoon as the People came out of *Egypt*, and Princes of the People appear tranſacting the Affairs of their People; and no Appointment or Conſtitution to ſettle theſe Tribes appears from the Time of *Jacob:* and ſince there is no mention of any Tribe in *Iſrael*, until *Jacob*'s Appointment of them juſt before his Death: It is manifeſt, that this Conſtitution owes its Riſe to *Jacob*'s Appointment, and took place from that Time.

From this Time to the Time of the Captivity of *Babylon*, there is no Suſpicion that the Tribe of *Judah* wanted Rulers and Princes within themſelves: The Power of the Heads of Tribes ſubſiſted under the Government of the

Kings of *Judah* and *Iſrael*, and was ſo conſiderable, that nothing of Moment was done without their Advice and Conſent *.

The ten Tribes, which conſtituted the Kingdom of *Iſrael*, were carried into Captivity by *Salmaneſer* about ſeven hundred Years before *Chriſt*; and this put an End to the Being of theſe Tribes; they never recovered again, or appeared as a People from that Time to this. And here the Completion of the Prophecy relating to the *Continuation* of *Judah's Sceptre*, after the Removal of the others, has its Commencement.

The Diviſion of the Kingdom prepar'd the Way for the Completion of this Prophecy. Had all the Tribes continu'd under one Head, they would probably have all undergone the ſame Fate; but being

* Hi Tribuum Principes Reipublicæ Hebraicæ erant Megiſtanes, & Capita, & totius Populi Magiſtratui, ſive Judex eſſet ſive Rex, aderant, & cum illo ſedentes partim conſilia inibant, partim jus reddebant. Quinetiam ſimul cum ſummo Reipublicæ Capite, Judice, aut Rege, ſe obligabant, ſi quid eſſet jurejurando publico ſanciendum. *Menoch. de Rep. Heb. Lib. 1. cap. 6.*

divided in Intereſt, and having different Kings, and conſequently not being concern'd together in Matters of Peace and War, their Fortunes proved very different; for the *Aſſyrian* Captivity was Ruin to the ten Tribes, but the *Babyloniſh* Captivity was only a ſeventy Years Puniſhment to *Judah*.

The ſeventy Years of the *Babyloniſh* Captivity, is the only Period of Time that can create any Difficulty upon this Scheme. But if we conſider that the *Jews* were not carried to *Babylon* to be *Slaves*, but were tranſplanted as *a Colony*, to people the great, and newly enlarged, City of *Babylon**; that they are commanded therefore by the Prophet, to *build Houſes*, and *plant Gardens*; and to *ſeek the Peace of the City*, in which they were *Captives*; Circumſtances, which prove them not to have been Slaves in *Babylon*: That upon the Expiration of the ſeventy Years, many of them were ſo well ſettled in Eaſe and Plenty, that they refus'd to return to their own Country again: If

Jer. xxix. 5, 7.

* See Dr. *Prideaux's* Connexion of the Old and New Teſtament, *Part* I. *B.* 2. *p.* 96. 8*vo Edit.*

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we conſider further, that the *Jews* lived at *Babylon* as a diſtinct People, and were govern'd in their own Affairs by their own Rulers and Elders, appointed Feaſts and Faſts, and ordered all other Matters relating to their *own* civil and eccleſiaſtical Affairs within themſelves †; it will take off the Weight of this Difficulty, and ſhew us, that the *Power* and *Sceptre* of *Judah*, relative to the Being and Subſiſtence of the Tribe, were not removed during this Captivity. And indeed, what Reaſon is there to think, that this Conſtitution was diſturb'd by the tranſplanting the People to *Babylon*, which began under the Power of the Kings of *Egypt*, and ſubſiſted with all the Forms and Changes of Government, which the Peo-

† *The Decree for deſtroying the* Jews, *in* Apocryphal Eſther, *is founded in this*, That they had Laws contrary to all Nations, and continually deſpiſed the Commandments of the King *c.* xiii. ℣. 4. *And when the Decree is reverſed, they are ſaid to live by moſt juſt Laws, c.* xvi. ℣. 15. Eſther, *in her Prayer for the People, ſays*, O Lord, give not thy Sceptre unto them that be nothing, and let them not laugh at our Fall, *c.* xiv. 11. *And if the Writer of the* Hiſtory of Suſanna *knew any Thing of the State of the* Jews *in* Babylon, *'tis plain they had* Rulers *and* Judges *of their own, who executed their Laws even in capital Cauſes*, ℣. 41. & 62.

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ple of *Iſrael* underwent, from their coming out of the *Egyptian* Bondage, to their going into the Captivity of *Babylon*; ſure we are, from the Accounts preſerv'd in the Books of *Ezra* and *Nehemiah*, that the Tribes of *Judah* and *Benjamin* ſubſiſted as ſuch, during the Captivity, and preſerved very regular Accounts of their Genealogies: That they had likewiſe their *Chiefs* and *Elders*, who decided their Affairs, there is no doubt; they are mention'd in *Ezra* and *Nehemiah*, as the Perſons managing the great Affairs of the Return, and re-eſtabliſhing the Service of God in *Jeruſalem*: That they came back to their own Country as a *People* and *Nation* govern'd by their own Laws, is evident from the Complaint ſent againſt them to *Artaxerxes*, in which they make too great a Figure, and are repreſented too conſiderable to be thought a Set of mere Slaves, ſubjected entirely to a foreign Yoke, without Law or Government of their own. 'Tis true, that from the Time of the Captivity, the *Jews* were never ſo free a People again, as they had been formerly; they liv'd under the

Ezra i. 5. ii. 68. iii. 12. viii. 1. ix. 1. x. 14. Nehem. ii. 16. iv. 14. 19. vi. 17.

Ezra iv. 11.

Sub-

Subjection of the *Perſian* Monarch, and under the Empire of the *Greeks* and *Romans* to their laſt Deſtruction; but ſtill they liv'd as a *diſtinct People*, govern'd by their own Law*: And the Authority of the *Perſian* and other Kings over 'em, deſtroy'd not the Rule and Authority of *Judah*, which ſubſiſted with it; as it had, in its firſt Commencement, ſubſiſted under the Kings of *Egypt*, and oftentimes under Judges and Kings of their own. How the Caſe ſtood in the Time of the *Haſmonean* Princes, may be collected from ſeveral Paſſages of the *Maccabees*; but eſpecially from the Preambles of publick Leagues made by, and with the *Jews*. Hiſtorians oftentimes ſpeak looſely, but authentick publick Acts preſerve Forms, and ſhew in what Hands the Government reſides. The Ambaſſadors ſent from *Jeruſalem* to *Rome*, ſpeak in the Name of *Judas Maccabeus* and his Brethren, and the *People of the* Jews. The League which followed upon this Application

1 Mac. viii. 20.

* Artaxerxes's *Commiſſion to* Ezra *is expreſs, that he ſhould appoint ſuch Magiſtrates and Judges,* as know the Laws of thy God.

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to *Rome* is ſtyl'd, *A Covenant with the People of the* Jews. When the League was made with the *Lacedæmonians*, the publick Letter was in the following Style, *Jonathan the High-prieſt and the Elders of the Nation and the Princes, and the other People of the* Jews. When *Simon* was their Governour, his Authority was convey'd to him, *in the Congregation of the Princes and the People, and Rulers of the Nation, and Elders of the Country.* Theſe are elſewhere call'd, *the Council*, and the *reſt of the* Jews; and the *People of the* Jews. Theſe Inſtances are ſufficient to ſhew, that the Polity of the *Jews*, as a diſtinct People, under Heads and Rulers of their own, ſubſiſted in this Period, and was not extinguiſh'd by the Power of the *Haſmonean* Princes.

Ibid. v. 29. xii. 3. xv. 17. Ibid. xii. 6, 14, 20. xiv. 28. 2 Mac. xi. 27. Ibid. v. 34.

That things continued in this State to the very death of *Chriſt*, may be evinced from many Paſſages in the Goſpel; ſome I ſhall produce and cloſe this Article.

When our Saviour tells the *Jews*, *the Truth ſhall make you free*, they reply, *We are* Abraham's *Children, and were never in Bondage to any Man.* Surely, they

John viii. 32, 33.

they had not forgot their Captivity in *Babylon*, much leſs could they be ignorant of the Power of the *Romans* over them at that time, and yet you ſee they account themſelves free; and ſo they were; for they lived by their own Laws, and executed Judgment among themſelves. This is plain from the Caſe of the Woman taken in Adultery; *Moſes in the Law*, ſay the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, *commanded us that ſuch ſhould be ſtoned*, *but what ſayeſt thou?* When our Saviour foretels his diſciples that they ſhould be *delivered up to Councils*, and *ſcourged in Synagogues*, he ſhews at the ſame time what Power and Authority were exerciſed in the Councils and Synagogues of the *Jews:* When *Pilate*, willing to be deliver'd of *Jeſus*, ſays to the *Jews*, *Take ye him and crucify him*, and again, *Take ye him and judge him according to your own Law*; he alſo ſhews, that the *Jews* lived under their own Law, and had the Exerciſe of judicial Authority among themſelves*. This was the

John viii. 5.

Mat. x. 17.

John xix. 6.

John xviii. 31.

* See this prov'd at large by *Waggenſeil. Car Lip. Con. pag.* 299. *&c.*

Condi-

Condition of things at the death of *Chriſt*.

By this Deduction it appears evidently, That the *Sceptre* placed in the Hand of *Judah*, by his Father *Jacob* juſt before his Death, continued in his Poſterity till the very death of *Chriſt*. From that time all things began to work towards the Deſtruction of the *Jewiſh* Polity, and within a few Years, their City, Temple, and Government were utterly ruined; and the *Jews*, not carried into a gentle Captivity, to enjoy their Law, and live as a diſtinct People in a foreign Country, but they were ſold like Beaſts in a Market, and became Slaves in the ſtricteſt Senſe; and from that Day to this have had neither *Prince* nor *Lawgiver* among them. Nor will they ever be able, after all their Pretences, to ſhew any ſigns or marks of the *Sceptre* among them, till they diſcover the unknown Country, *where never Mankind dwelt*, and where the Apocryphal *Eſdras* has placed their Brethren of the ten Tribes. 2 Eſd. xiii. 41.

Before I take leave of this Subject, it is neceſſary to obſerve, That this Interpretation

tation of the Prophecy of *Jacob* relating to *Judah*, is very much confirmed by another Prophecy given by *Moſes*, not long before his Death. In the xxxiii. Chap. of *Deut.* *Moſes* bleſſes the Tribes; and as there are many Paſſages in this laſt Benediction of *Moſes*, which correſpond to the Bleſſings pronounced by *Jacob*, ſo particularly, the Bleſſing of *Judah* by *Moſes* ſeems to relate to the laſt State of that Tribe and the continuance of the Sceptre of *Judah*, after the Diſperſion of the other Tribes. The Words of *Moſes* are theſe; *Hear, Lord the Voice of* Judah, *and bring him unto his People: Let his Hands be ſufficient for him, and be thou an help to him from his Enemies.* This Benediction cannot relate to the time when it was given, for then *Judah*'s Hand were very ſufficient for him, this Tribe being by much the greateſt of the twelve Tribes, as appears by two different Accounts of the Forces of *Iſrael* in the Book of *Numbers*; and there was more Reaſon to put up this Petition for ſeveral other Tribes, than for *Judah*. Beſides, what is the meaning of *bring-*

Deut. xxxiii. 7.

Numb. i. and xxvi.

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ing Judah to his People? How were he and his People at this time ſeparated? What means likewiſe the other part of the Petition? *Be thou an Help to him from his Enemies.* This Petition ſuppoſes a State of Diſtreſs; yet what Diſtreſs was *Judah* in at this time, at leaſt what greater Diſtreſs than the other Tribes? The antient *Targums*, and ſome old Verſions, underſtand the firſt Petition of bringing *Judah back to his People*, to be only a Requeſt, in his behalf, for ſafe return from the Day of Battle; but was there not the ſame Reaſon for the ſame Petition in behalf of every Tribe? Nay how much better would it have ſuited *Reuben*, *Gad*, and the half Tribe of *Manaſſeh*, who left their People and their Settlements on the other ſide of *Jordan*, and paſſed over the River in the very Front of the Battle to aſſiſt their Brethren. Joſh. iv, 12.

But if you refer *this* Prophecy to the Prophecy of *Jacob*, and to the continuance of the *Sceptre* of *Judah* after the Deſtruction of the other Tribes, every Expreſſion is natural and proper, and ſuited to the Occaſion. Do but ſuppoſe *Moſes* in the Spirit of Prophecy, to have a

Sight of the State of Affairs when all the People were in Captivity, and you will ſee how this *prophetick Prayer* anſwers to that State. All the Tribes were in Captivity, the ten Tribes in *Aſſyria*, and *Judah* in *Babylon*; but it was implied in *Jacob*'s Prophecy, that *Judah* ſhould *retain* the *Sceptre*, and return again; for *Judah* only, therefore, does *Moſes* pray, that *he* may *come to his People again*. *Jacob* had foretold that, at this time, the *gathering of the People ſhould be to Judah*; that he ſhould be all in all, the only Head of all the Remnant of *Iſrael*; theſe People deſtined to be gathered to *Judah*, were now diſperſed in all Parts of the Eaſt, and were no People, could be no People till the Return of *Judah*; at which Return many of all the Tribes were to join themſelves to *Judah*, and with him to form one People: How properly then does *Moſes* pray, that *Judah might return to his People*.

Let his Hands be ſufficient for him: Good Reaſon was there for this Petition, for ſcarcely were his Hands ſufficient at the Return from *Babylon*. The Tribe of *Judah* in *Moſes* his Time conſiſted of

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76500, reckoning only thoſe of twenty Years old and upward. But upon the return from *Babylon*, *Judah* with *Benjamin*, the *Levites*, and the *Remnant* of *Iſrael* made only 42360, and in ſo weak a State they were, that *Sanballat*, in great Scorn ſaid, *what do theſe feeble Jews?* And the People themſelves complain as being not ſufficient to go thro' the Toil of building the Wall; *and* Judah *ſaid, the ſtrength of the bearers of Burdens is decayed, and there is much Rubbiſh, ſo that we are not able to build the Wall.* Numb. ii. 6. Ezra ii. 46. Neh. iv. 2. Neh. iv. 10.

Be thou an Help to him from his Enemies. The Books *Ezra* and *Nehemiah* are convincing Proofs of the great Difficulties and Oppoſitions which the *Jews* found in ſetting up their Temple and City; once their Enemies had ſo prevailed, that Orders came from the Court of *Perſia* to ſtop all their Proceedings; and even at laſt, when *Nehemiah* came to their Aſſiſtance with a new Commiſſion from *Artaxerxes*, they were ſo beſet with Enemies, that the Men employed in building the Wall, *every one with one of his*

Neh. iv. 17. *his Hands wrought in the Work, and with the other Hand held a Weapon.*

Lay theſe two Prophecies now together; *Jacob* foretels that *Judah's Sceptre* ſhould continue till *Shiloh* came; which is in effect foretelling that the *Sceptres* of the other Tribes ſhould not continue ſo long: *Moſes* in the Spirit of Prophecy ſees the Deſolation of *all* the *Tribes*; he ſees the Tribes of the Kingdom of *Iſrael* carried away by the *Aſſyrians*, the People of *Judah* by the *Babylonians*; he ſees that *Judah* ſhould again return, *weak*, *haraſſed*, and ſcarcely able to maintain himſelf in his own Country; for them therefore he conceives this prophetick Prayer: *Hear, Lord, the Voice of Judah, and bring* him *unto his People: Let his Hands be ſufficient for him, and be thou an help to him from his Enemies.*

You'll ſay, perhaps, why did not *Jacob* foretel alſo the Continuance of the *Sceptre* of *Benjamin*, for the Tribe of *Benjamin* run the ſame Fortune with that of *Judah*; they went together into Captivity, they returned home together, and were both in Being when *Shiloh* came? In anſwer to this, I have two things to offer.

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Firſt, it has already appeared that from the Diviſion of the Kingdoms after the Death of *Solomon*, the Tribe of *Benjamin*, and the Remnant of *Iſrael*, that is part of all the other Tribes adhered to *Judah*, and formed one People under *Judah* as their Head; and this was conſonant unto *Jacob*'s Prophecy, *Unto him ſhall the gathering of the People be.*

Secondly, Though the Continuance of the *Sceptre* of *Benjamin* is not foretold (for the *Sceptre* was to be *Judah*'s) yet the Continuance of the Tribe or People of *Benjamin* is diſtinctly foretold both by *Jacob* and by *Moſes*. The Bleſſing of *Benjamin* as delivered by *Jacob* is thus, Benjamin *ſhall ravin as a Wolf: In the Morning he ſhall devour the Prey, and at Night he ſhall divide the Spoil:* As delivered by *Moſes* it is thus, *Of* Benjamin *he ſaid, the Beloved of the Lord ſhall dwell in Safety by him; and the Lord ſhall cover him all the Day long, and he ſhall dwell between his Shoulders.* When *Jacob* profeſſes to declare what ſhall befal his Sons in the laſt Times, is it hard to ſay what muſt be underſtood by the *Morning* and *Night* in *Jacob*'s Prophecy

Prophecy concerning *Benjamin?* The *natural Morning* and *Night* cannot poſſibly be underſtood here; and what other *Morning* and *Night* can you ſuppoſe intended, but the *Morning* and the *Night* of the *Jewiſh* State *? For this State is the Subject of all *Jacob*'s Prophecy from one End to the other; conſequently it is here foretold of *Benjamin*, that he ſhould continue to the very laſt Times of the *Jewiſh* State. And this Interpretation is confirmed by *Moſes* his Prophecy, for the Prophecy of *Moſes* is in Truth an Expoſition of *Jacob*'s Prophecy. *Benjamin*, ſays *Moſes*, *ſhall dwell in Safety*; *The Lord ſhall cover him* ALL THE DAY LONG, *he ſhall dwell between his Shoulders.* What is this, *all the Day long?* You ſee how *Benjamin* is diſtinguiſhed; he is to *dwell in Safety*, under the *Cover* of the *Lord*, and *between* his *Shoulders all the Day long*. Does not this import a Promiſe of a *longer Continuance* to *Benjamin*, than to the other Tribes? And was it not moſt exactly fulfilled?

* *Thus ſome* Jewiſh *Interpreters referred to by* Bochart, *underſtood the Expreſſion.* Manè, id eſt primis Iſraelitici regni temporibus—Sub veſperam, id eſt poſt Captivitatis Babylonicæ tempora. *Hieron. cap.* 10. *pag.* 828.

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The learned *Bochart*, upon very ſlight Grounds ſuppoſes an Inverſion in the Order of the Words in *Jacob*'s Prophecy concerning *Benjamin*; and by the *Morning and the Night*, he underſtands the *Night and Morning*; ſo that the Time deſcribed, is, in his Senſe, the *whole Night*, and not *the whole Day*. All this is built upon the Property of the *Wolf*, to which *Benjamin* is compared: 'Tis a *Night Wolf*, ſays *Bochart*, which catches the Prey in the Night, and feeds on it in the Morning. But I very much queſtion whether the Style of the Scripture will bear the Teſt of ſuch Claſſick Nicety and Exactneſs. And tho' this Imagination has been followed by conſiderable Commentators; yet ſince *Moſes*, in his own Prophecy on *Benjamin*, has expounded *this Morning and Night*, by *all the Day long*, there is no room to make any further queſtion about it.

I have nothing more to add, but to acquaint the Reader that the Interpretation of *Jacob*'s Prophecy, *now* advanced is not a mere Invention of my own. It is, as to the main Point, the ſame with that, which is the *fourth* in *Huetius*, and

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by him rejected; but for ſuch Reaſons as have been fully obviated in this Account. 'Tis the ſame, which *Junius* and *Tremellius*, and our own learned Countryman *Ainſworth*, eſpouſed; and which not many Years ago was revived and improved by Mr. *Joncourt*. This laſt mentioned Gentleman publiſhed ſeveral Letters upon obſcure Paſſages of Scripture, and among the reſt one upon the *Sceptre of* Judah, which are very well worth the reading. As to the Letter upon the *Sceptre of* Judah, if I had thought nothing wanting in it to clear this Prophecy, I wou'd not have troubled the World with this Diſſertation. But whether I have ſucceeded better in this Attempt, than thoſe, who have gone before me in the ſame Argument, belongs not to me to judge.

FINIS.

BRITISH 26 JY 72